VISIT…

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Epic Comics Book 6 $5.95 $7.25 (CAN)

CLIVE BARKER'S HELLRAISER

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Jamie Tolagson

Erik Saltzgaber
Joe Barruso

Miguel Ferrer
Bill Mumy
Bill Wray

foreword
D. G. Chichester

Original Sin
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Lingerings
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Tunnel of Love
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The Trainer
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DEREK '90

FOREWORD

As I recall, the graveyard of undead was right of the altar. Behind the pews, willing victims crawled past bloody teeth into a demon's mouth. And the mad doctor practiced vivisection in the Sunday school classroom.

That's human vivisection, of course.

I refer to that most dichotomous of American institutions, the church haunted house. Once upon each Halloween the St. Gabriel's youth group hung body parts in the corridors and crannies of the church building, as crowds gathered to get the bejeesus scared out of 'em in a place normally reserved for getting you-know-who drummed into 'em. All manner of thing slithered through that creepshow — and that was only the paying patrons. As to the performers, I will always recall them fiendishly, ahem, fondly. My mother cackling over a witch's cauldron. The airlock oozing alien slime built by my dad. Shambling zombies answering to my brother's names. My friend, Pat Denham's adding ambience by screaming herself hoarse, hitting notes the choir never dreamed.

I don't think we were insane . . . at least, not certifiably; other churches put on spook houses, I know, I've seen mention of them in supermarket flyers and the Time-Life *Unknowable Mysteries* series (read the book!). Still, there was always something odd in a house of God, a beacon of light, sanctioning a get-together that pulled out all the stops to stir up darkness; it didn't matter that the box of eyeballs were only peeled grapes (was that all?), or that the intestines shoved into your hands was just cold spaghetti (you hope . . .), skin had done some version of its crawling act by the time you came out of St. Gabe's those nights. And what attracted such opposites? The cash register's ring? A race memory of ancient pagan rituals? Some deep metaphor a light existing only through the fact of primordial dark? Or perhaps just the acknowledgment that it's good for the soul to be scared sometimes . . .

We won't answer those questions here tonight, but we will invite you in to our version of that haunted house. Our staff vivisectionist is out, but we do have **Hellraiser** alumni James Robert Smith and newcomer Jamie Tolagson's "Lingerings," a haunting testimony to loneliness and lunacy. No witches, but there is a mother fighting Hell itself for her lost child in "Original Sin"; writer Ron Wolfe and artist SMS chronicle the descent. There are no demons' mouths to crawl, but we offer "Tunnels of Love," passages triggering a private war between a soldier and Cenobites; it's a 'Nam flashback of Erik Saltzgaber — also scripting the comic adaptation of Clive's *Weaveworld* — and illustrator Joe Barruso. And while we're low on alien slime, there's plenty of the human variety in "The Trainer," a gambling parable by writers Bill Mumy and Miguel Ferrer and artist Bill Wray (now coloring the upcoming *POV* limited series).

Here, gentle reader, in our dark church, the eyeballs are truly eyeballs and the intestines are still warm. Plunge your hands in deep and pray . . .

. . . as if that will do you any good.

Daniel Chichester
consulting editor

ANDY, KIDDO! MOMMY'S HOME!
JED
HOME... SUCH AS IT IS.
LOOK, ANDY. I BROUGHT YOU SOMETHING.
SOMETHING ELSE FROM THE SECOND-HAND STORE. SOMEONE ELSE'S CAST-OFF JUNK, BETTER THAN NOTHING.
NICE TOYS FOR YOU, ANDY...
A BABY COULDN'T KNOW THE DIFFERENCE. COULD HE?
GIVE ME THE BLOCK, ANDY... DIRTY BLOCK... BAD TOY... PLEASE, ANDY!...

ORIGINAL SIN

Ron Wolfe
writer
SM.S
artist
James Novak
letterer

I'M SORRY, ANDY... I SHOULDN'T TRY TO TAKE AWAY YOUR FAVORITE TOY.
HE HAS SO LITTLE. AND SHE WANTED SO MUCH FOR HIM.
LAURA KENDALL CAN'T BEAR TO DEPRIVE HER BABY OF THE ONLY TOY HE'S EVER LOVED...
EVEN THOUGH THE STRANGE BLOCK SEEMS TO BE MORE THAN A TOY TO HIM.
AREN'T YOU EVER GOING TO WALK, ANDY? IT'S TIME, YOU OUGHT TO WALK!
AREN'T YOU EVER GOING TO TALK TO ME?
A BABY'S FLEETING SPAN OF ATTENTION SHOULDN'T ALLOW FOR SUCH A THING AS OBSESSION. BUT LAURA DOESN'T KNOW WHAT ELSE TO CALL IT.
FOR MONTHS--EVER SINCE SHE BROUGHT HIM THE BLOCK IN A SACK OF ALPHABET BLOCKS FROM THE FLEA MARKET...
SHE HAS WATCHED HIM... TURNING, TWISTING, PRYING AT THE BLOCK, ARRESTING HIS NORMAL DEVELOPMENT...
LAURA, DAMN YOU!

ALWAYS THROWING OUR GOOD MONEY AWAY ON MORE SECOND-HAND JUNK FOR BABY! ALWAYS THE BABY!...

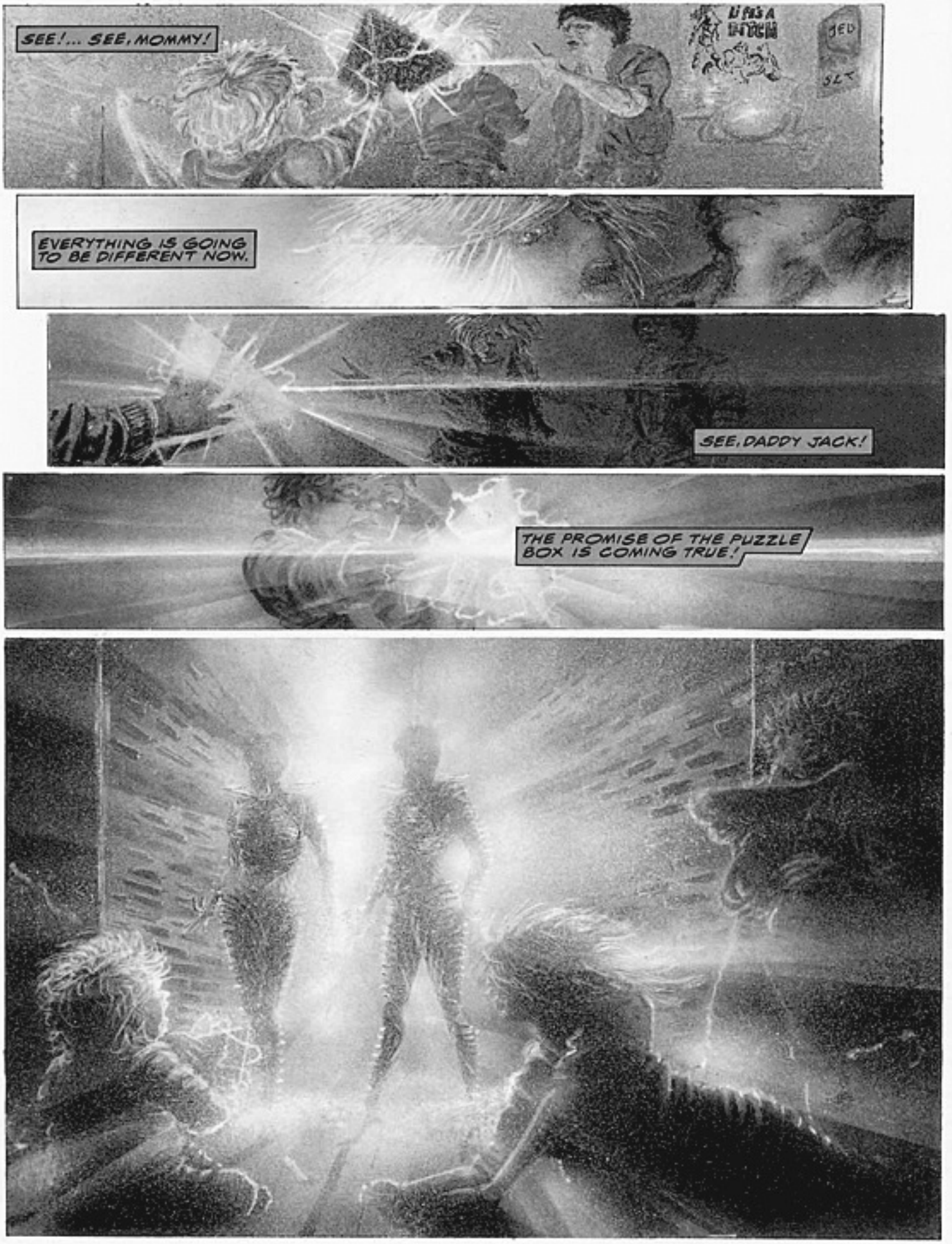
I HAVE TO BUY USED TOYS, USED CLOTHES FOR ANDY...

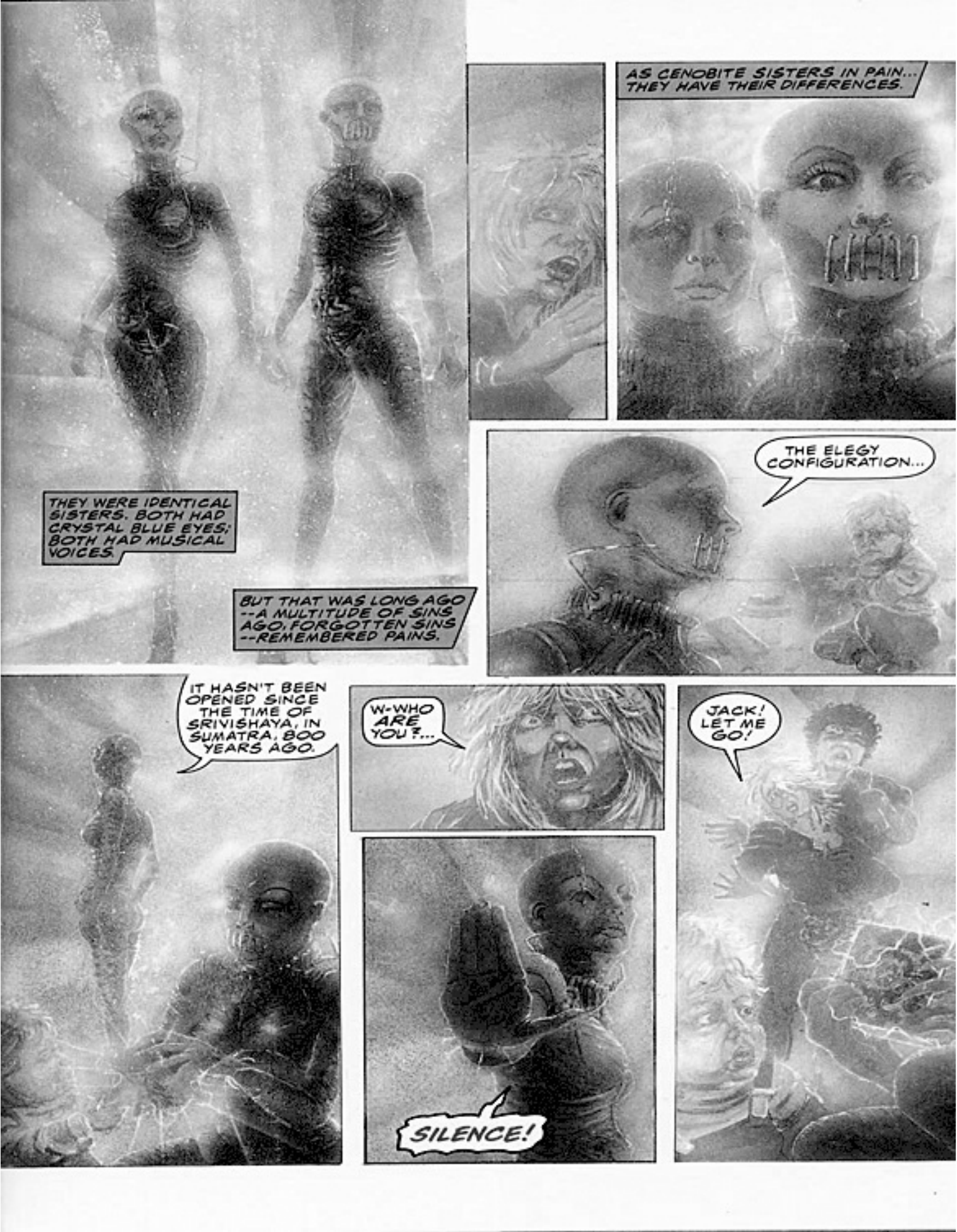
BUT IT'S NOTHING BUT THE BEST FOR YOU! RIGHT, JACK?

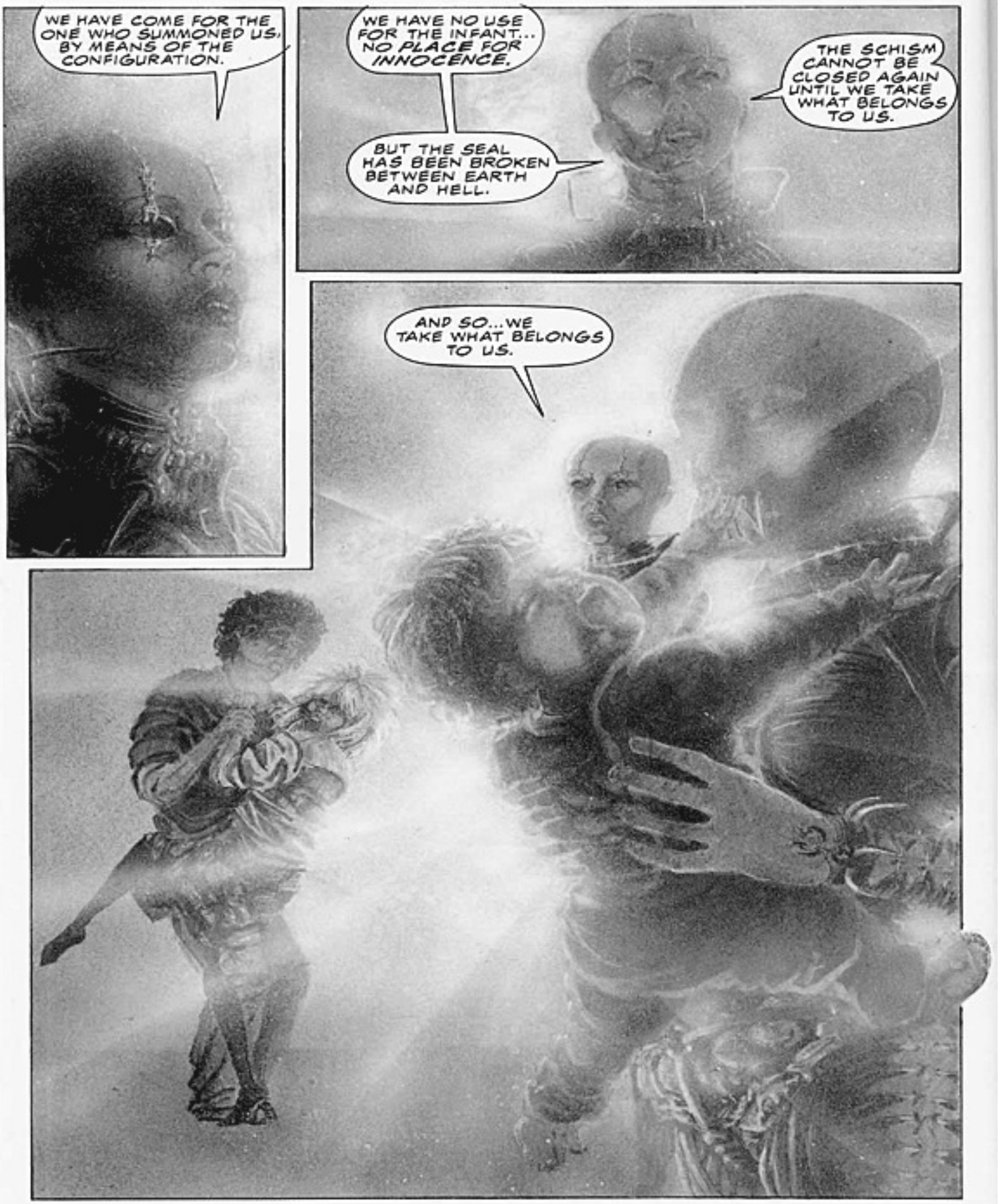
AND LOTS OF IT!

HER HUSBAND USED TO TOUCH HER FACE SO GENTLY, SO LOVINGLY.
THACK
NOT ANYMORE... NOT SINCE THE BABY CAME.
BUT WHAT KIND OF MAN COULD RESENT THE ATTENTION PAID TO HIS OWN SON?...

LITTLE ANDREW DOESN'T UNDERSTAND ANY OF THIS.
BUT HE UNDERSTANDS THE SOUND OF THE BAD, BAD ANGER...
...AND THAT LAURA LOVES HIM...
...AND THAT JACK IS HURTING LAURA...
...AND THAT BIG JACK WOULD LIKE TO HURT HIM, TOO.
AND, MOST OF ALL, HE UNDERSTANDS THE WHISPERED PROMISE OF THE PUZZLE BOX.
THAT HE CAN STOP THE ANGRY VOICES. HE CAN MAKE THINGS CHANGE.
IF ONLY, IF ONLY HE CAN...
WORK THE PUZZLE!


SEE!... SEE, MOMMY!
EVERYTHING IS GOING TO BE DIFFERENT NOW.
SEE, DADDY JACK!
THE PROMISE OF THE PUZZLE BOX IS COMING TRUE!


THEY WERE IDENTICAL SISTERS. BOTH HAD CRYSTAL BLUE EYES; BOTH HAD MUSICAL VOICES.
BUT THAT WAS LONG AGO --A MULTITUDE OF SINS AGO, FORGOTTEN SINS --REMEMBERED PAINS.
AS CENOBITE SISTERS IN PAIN... THEY HAVE THEIR DIFFERENCES.
THE ELEGY CONFIGURATION...
IT HASN'T BEEN OPENED SINCE THE TIME OF SRIVISHAYA, IN SUMATRA, 800 YEARS AGO.
W-WHO ARE YOU?...
SILENCE!
JACK! LET ME GO!


WE HAVE COME FOR THE ONE WHO SUMMONED US, BY MEANS OF THE CONFIGURATION.
WE HAVE NO USE FOR THE INFANT... NO PLACE FOR INNOCENCE.
BUT THE SEAL HAS BEEN BROKEN BETWEEN EARTH AND HELL.
THE SCHISM CANNOT BE CLOSED AGAIN UNTIL WE TAKE WHAT BELONGS TO US.
AND SO...WE TAKE WHAT BELONGS TO US.

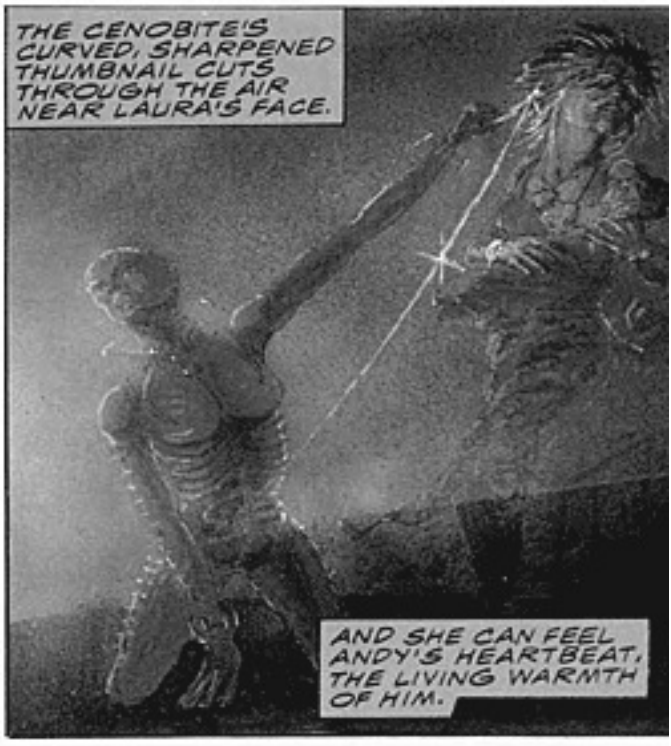
LET GO! WE'VE GOT TO STOP THEM!
DON'T BE CRAZY, LAURA.
WHATEVER THEY ARE... ALL THEY WANT IS THE BABY.
AND WE DON'T NEED THE BABY, HONEY-PIE. WE NEVER DID.
YOU AND ME... THAT'S ALL WE NEED.
NO!
SHUT UP! LET 'EM GO!
IF WE COULD CHOOSE, IT WOULD BE YOU THAT WE TOOK INTO HELL, JACK KENDALL.
BUT WE ARE BOUND BY THE LAW OF LEVIATHAN. WE DON'T CHOOSE.
LAURA USED TO IMAGINE SHE WOULD BE THRILLED TO HEAR THE FIRST WORD THAT ANDY LEARNED TO SAY.
INSTEAD, IT BREAKS HER HEART.
MOMMM-MAAA!

UNGHH!
SHE'D NEVER STRUCK BACK AT HIM BEFORE. SHE'D FEARED TO RISK THE CONSEQUENCE--
--JACK'S CRUELTY, HIS JEALOUSY, HIS DRUNKEN RAGE. NOW, SHE DOESN'T CARE.
SHE FOLLOWS THE CENOBITES, EVEN AS THE WALL ITSELF BEGINS TO SOLIDIFY BEHIND HER, LIKE A HARDENING WEB.
WAIT!
WAIT!
SHE STRUGGLES OUT OF THE JACKET, TERRIFIED, DESPERATE TO SAVE HER CHILD.
BUT THE SISTERS DON'T ANSWER HER CRIES. THEY DON'T WAIT FOR HER. THEY IN NO WAY ACKNOWLEDGE THAT LAURA EXISTS, LEAVING HER ALONE.
ALONE AND LOST... IN HELL.
MOMMMM-MA!

LAURA'S FEAR IS TERRIBLE. BUT ANDY IS EVERYTHING GOOD IN HER LIFE, AND THERE ISN'T A FEAR IN HELL TO EQUAL THE LOVE SHE FEELS FOR HIM.

THE CENOBITE'S CURVED, SHARPENED THUMBNAIL CUTS THROUGH THE AIR NEAR LAURA'S FACE.

AND SHE CAN FEEL ANDY'S HEARTBEAT, THE LIVING WARMTH OF HIM.



CLUTCHING ANDY, LAURA RUNS THE ONLY WAY SHE CAN--DEEPER, DARKER, INTO THE LABYRINTH.

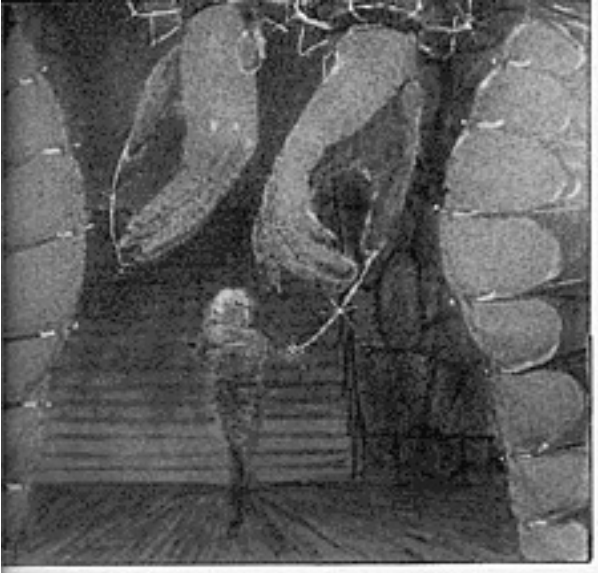
SHE ESCAPES FROM THE CENOBITE SISTERS, THINKING, MAYBE, SHE GOT LUCKY.

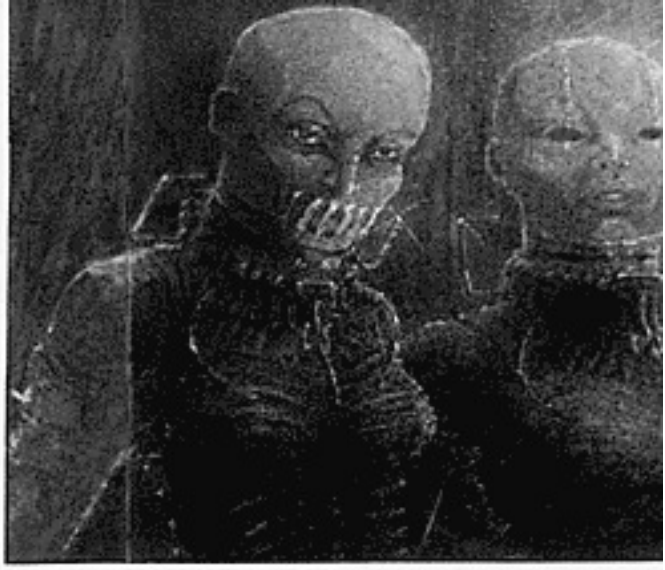
AS IF THERE COULD BE ANY SUCH THING AS *LUCK* IN HELL.

LIGHT! THERE'S LIGHT AHEAD OF US, ANDY!...
LIGHT. YES -- THE LIGHT OF A THOUSAND GLITTERING TORCHES THAT LINE THE WALL OF THE DESCENDING STAIRS -- BUT HER EYES AREN'T USED TO IT.
IN THIS MOMENT, SHE IS NEARLY AS BLIND AS THE CENOBITE WITH NO EYES.
SHE FALTERS. HER FEET SLIDE ON THE COLD, WET STONE OF THE STAIRWAY. SHE GROPES TOWARD THE WALL FOR SUPPORT, UNABLE TO SEE WHAT SHE'S TOUCHING.
BUT THE WALL SEES HER.
OH-HHH! MY HAND!
HUHH-SSS
ANDY! HANG ONTO ME, BABY!
THROWN OFF BALANCE, LAURA PLUMMETS INTO THE UNKNOWN, FEARING, THEY MIGHT FALL FOREVER.
BUT THIS ISN'T FOREVER -- IT'S A FLOOR MADE OF ROUGH SLABS OF ROCK, SPATTERED WITH LAURA'S BLOOD, LEAVING HER TO SEARCH HERSELF FOR BROKEN BONES.
INSTEAD SHE FINDS ANDY'S SHOE -- A TINY REMINDER OF HER SANITY.
HA! HA-HA-AAA! ANDY DROPPED HIS SHOE. WHOOPS, KIDDO!...
IF SHE CAN LAUGH, SHE KNOWS SHE IS STRONGER THAN SHE THOUGHT.
STRONGER THAN JACK EVER THOUGHT, ALL THAT TIME...
...MAYBE STRONG ENOUGH.

AND MAYBE NOT--
CREECA CREECA CREECA
THE FIERY EYES BEAR DOWN ON HER.
MMMMMOMMA!
BUT SHE IS LEARNING THAT HELL IS A PLACE FULL OF SURPRISES...
...ALTHOUGH NONE THAT ARE PLEASANT.
CREECA CREECA
ITS JOB IS TO STALK THESE PASSAGEWAYS IN SEARCH OF LIVING THINGS THAT DON'T BELONG--
--IN SEARCH OF LIVING THINGS THAT BLEED TOO FREELY.
MOTHERS, BABIES-- THINGS LIKE THAT.
SNUFF-FFF FFF

THE STONE GIVES WAY TO WOOD-- WOODEN STAIRS THAT SAG AND CREAK BENEATH HER, THREATENING TO BREAK--TO SEND HER FALLING INTO THE UNFATHOMABLE DARKNESS.
SHE IS AFRAID TO MOVE, AFRAID TO RUN--
SNUFFFF! SNF! SNUFFF!
AFRAID TO STOP RUNNING.
THE SHOE IS STAINED WITH HER BLOOD--STEEPED WITH HER DESPERATION, AS LAURA THROWS IT DOWN A STAIRWELL THAT BRANCHES TO THE SIDE, AWAY FROM HER.
AWAY FROM ANDY--
HUSH! MOMMY WON'T LET THEM HURT YOU!
SNF!
THE CREATURE SNUFFLES PAST HER.
IT LEAVES HER TO THE DARKNESS-- AND TO THE WET SOUND OF ITS FRENZY THE RENDING OF ANDY'S SHOE.
BUT NOW, LAURA, TOO, HAS FOUND SOMETHING OTHER THAN WHAT SHE EXPECTED.





YOU'VE COME HERE IN VAIN, LAURA KENDALL. THE BABY IS OURS. NOTHING CAN CHANGE THAT.

I-I WON'T LEAVE WITHOUT HIM.

THEN STAY IN HELL FROM THIS TIME ON. CHOOSE WHAT YOU WILL. STAY, AND WE'LL MAKE A GAME OF IT.

IF YOU PROTECT YOUR BABY WELL ENOUGH-- MAKE HIM STRONG ENOUGH--HE MIGHT ESCAPE FROM THIS PLACE.
BUT YOU WILL NOT ESCAPE. YOU WILL THINK BACK TO WHEN FREEDOM WAS YOURS FOR THE TAKING, BUT YOUR FREEDOM IS GONE NOW. HELL IS FOREVER.
DO YOU BIND YOURSELF TO THIS AGREEMENT?

I... FOR ANDY ...Y-YES.

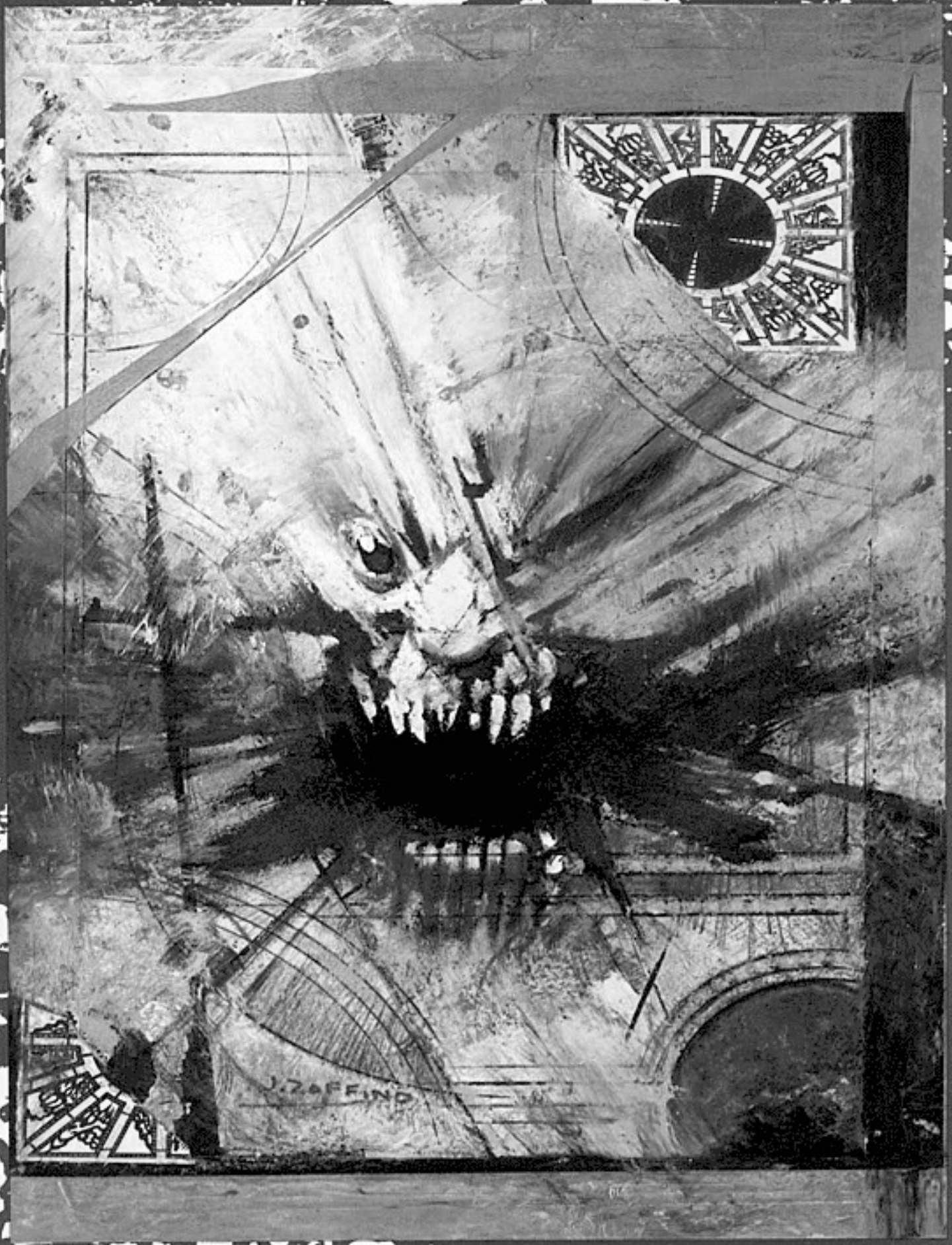
WELCOME TO GRIEF--
TO PAIN--
WELCOME TO HELL.

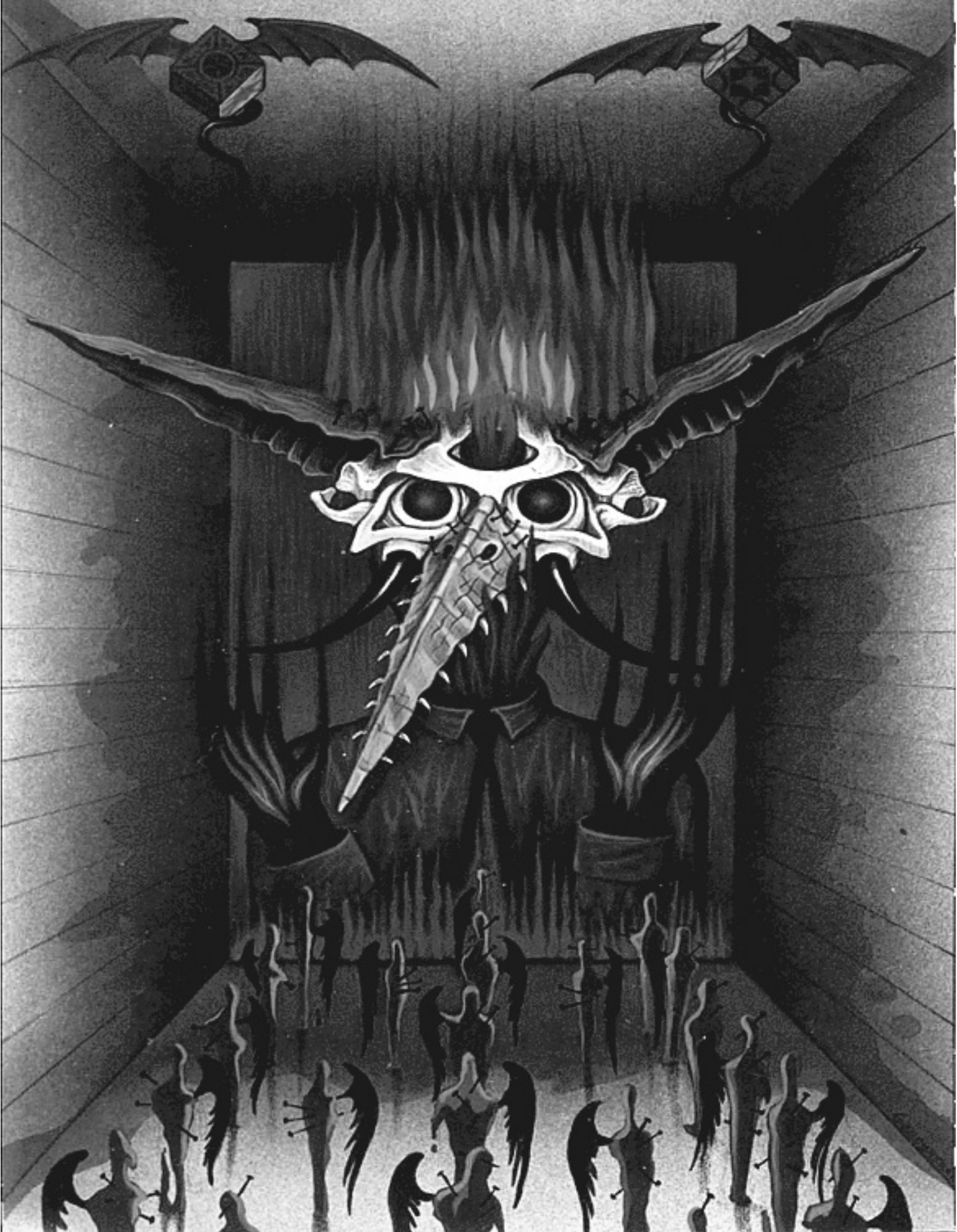
THE REAL
GHOSTBUSTE
JED
SET
WELCOME HOME... HONEY-PIE.

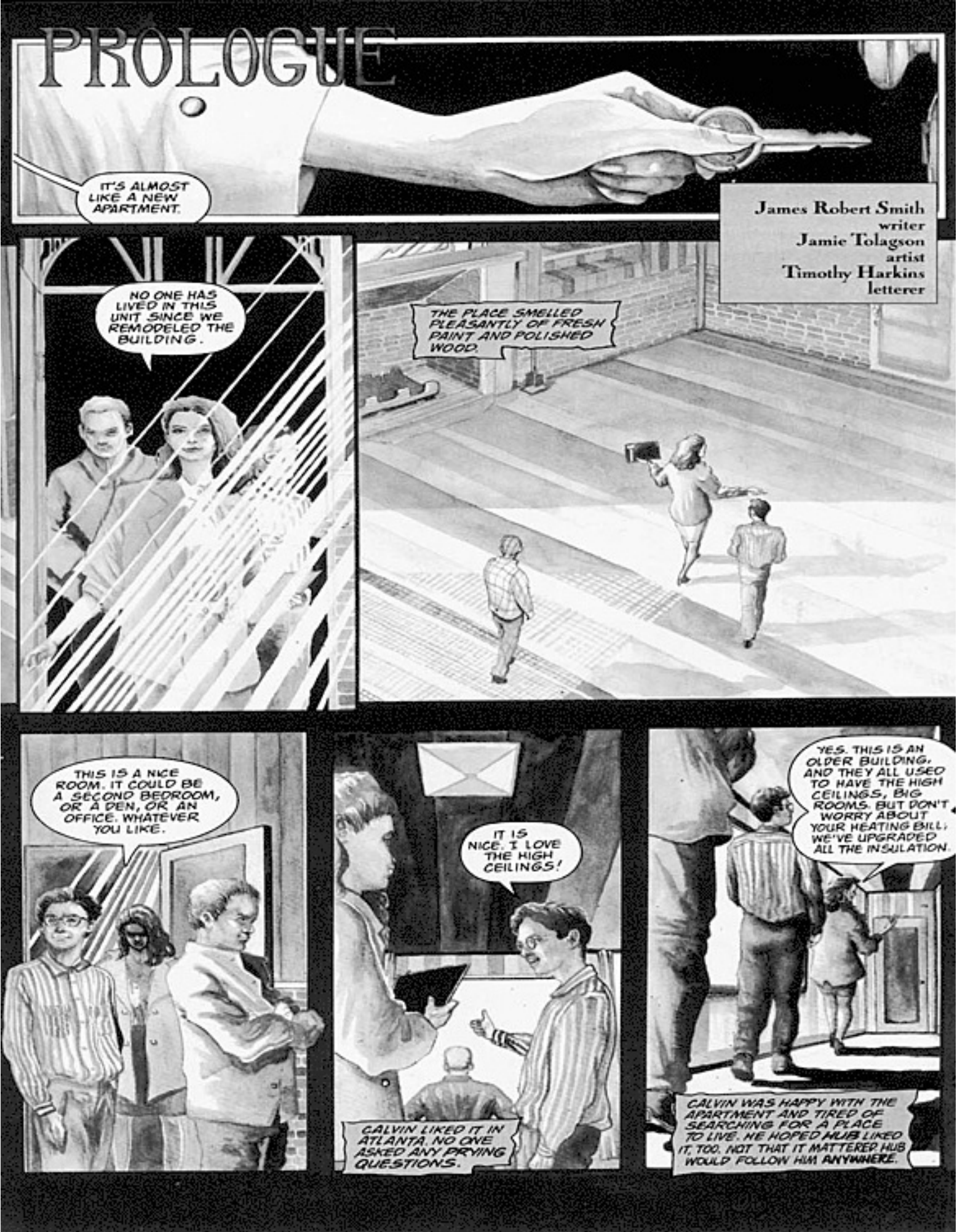
I KNEW YOU'D COME BACK TO ME. YOU ALWAYS COME BACK TO ME.
I'LL MAKE YOU SO DAMNED SORRY.

THE HELL YOU WILL!
JED
SET
AND LAURA SETS ANDY DOWN, HER BABY, HER KIDDO--

TO TAKE HIS FIRST STEP IN HELL--STANDING ON HIS OWN.
The End


J. ZAFFINO




PROLOGUE
IT'S ALMOST LIKE A NEW APARTMENT.
James Robert Smith
writer
Jamie Tolagson
artist
Timothy Harkins
letterer
NO ONE HAS LIVED IN THIS UNIT SINCE WE REMODELED THE BUILDING.
THE PLACE SMELLED PLEASANTLY OF FRESH PAINT AND POLISHED WOOD.
THIS IS A NICE ROOM. IT COULD BE A SECOND BEDROOM, OR A DEN, OR AN OFFICE. WHATEVER YOU LIKE.
IT IS NICE. I LOVE THE HIGH CEILINGS!
CALVIN LIKED IT IN ATLANTA. NO ONE ASKED ANY PRYING QUESTIONS.
YES. THIS IS AN OLDER BUILDING, AND THEY ALL USED TO HAVE THE HIGH CEILINGS, BIG ROOMS. BUT DON'T WORRY ABOUT YOUR HEATING BILL; WE'VE UPGRADED ALL THE INSULATION.
CALVIN WAS HAPPY WITH THE APARTMENT AND TIRED OF SEARCHING FOR A PLACE TO LIVE. HE HOPED HUB LIKED IT, TOO. NOT THAT IT MATTERED. HUB WOULD FOLLOW HIM ANYWHERE.

AND THIS IS THE BEDROOM.

HUB HELD HIMSELF BACK, WAITING.

"MY GOD," HUB THOUGHT. "ARE THEY--?"

HIS SHOES CLACKED OVER HARDWOOD AS HE WENT TO SEE.
IT'S HUGE!

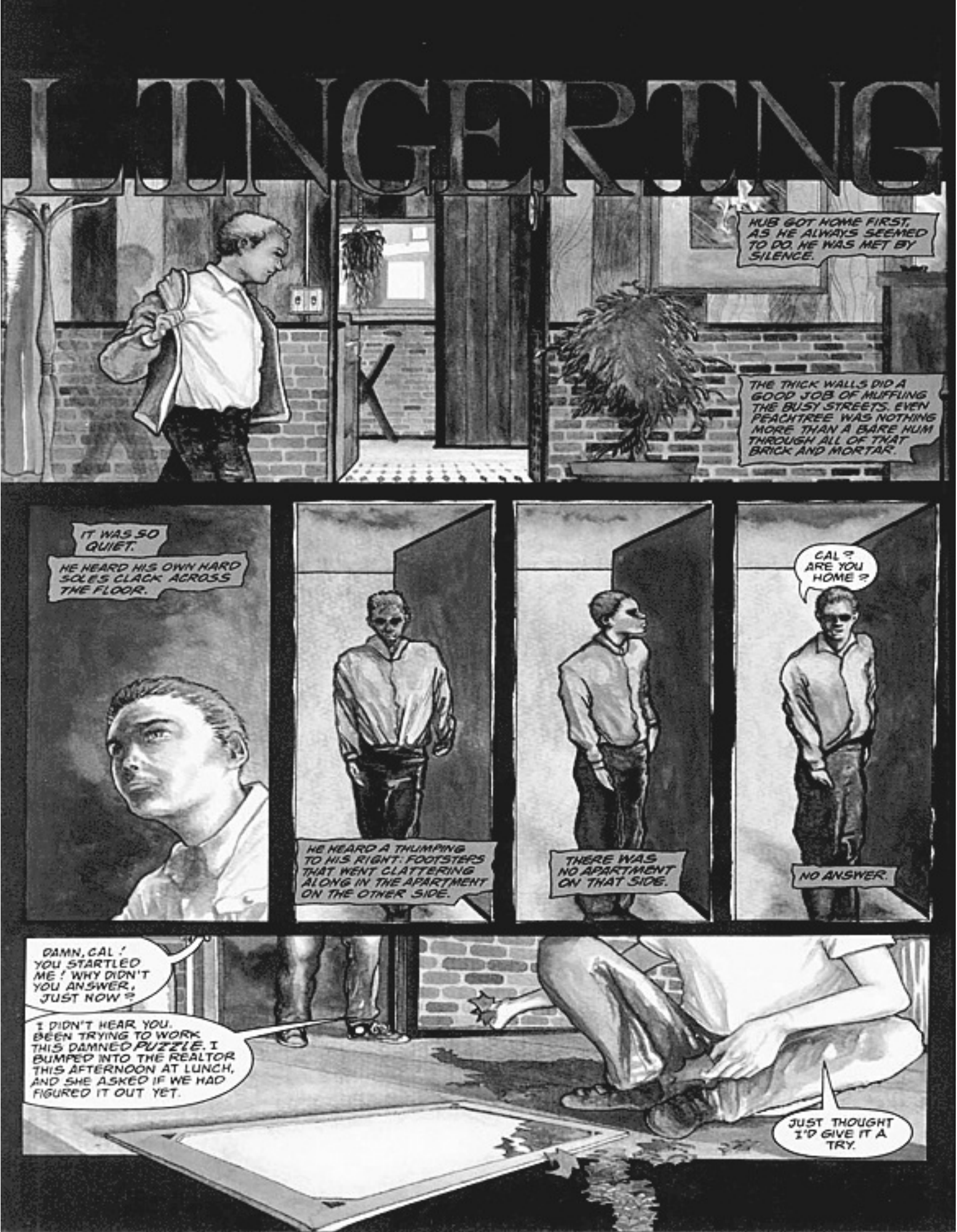
YES, THIS IS A LARGE ROOM. EIGHTEEN BY TWENTY. GOOD SIZED BY ANY STANDARDS, ESPECIALLY IN A MID-TOWN APARTMENT.'
WHAT IS THIS?

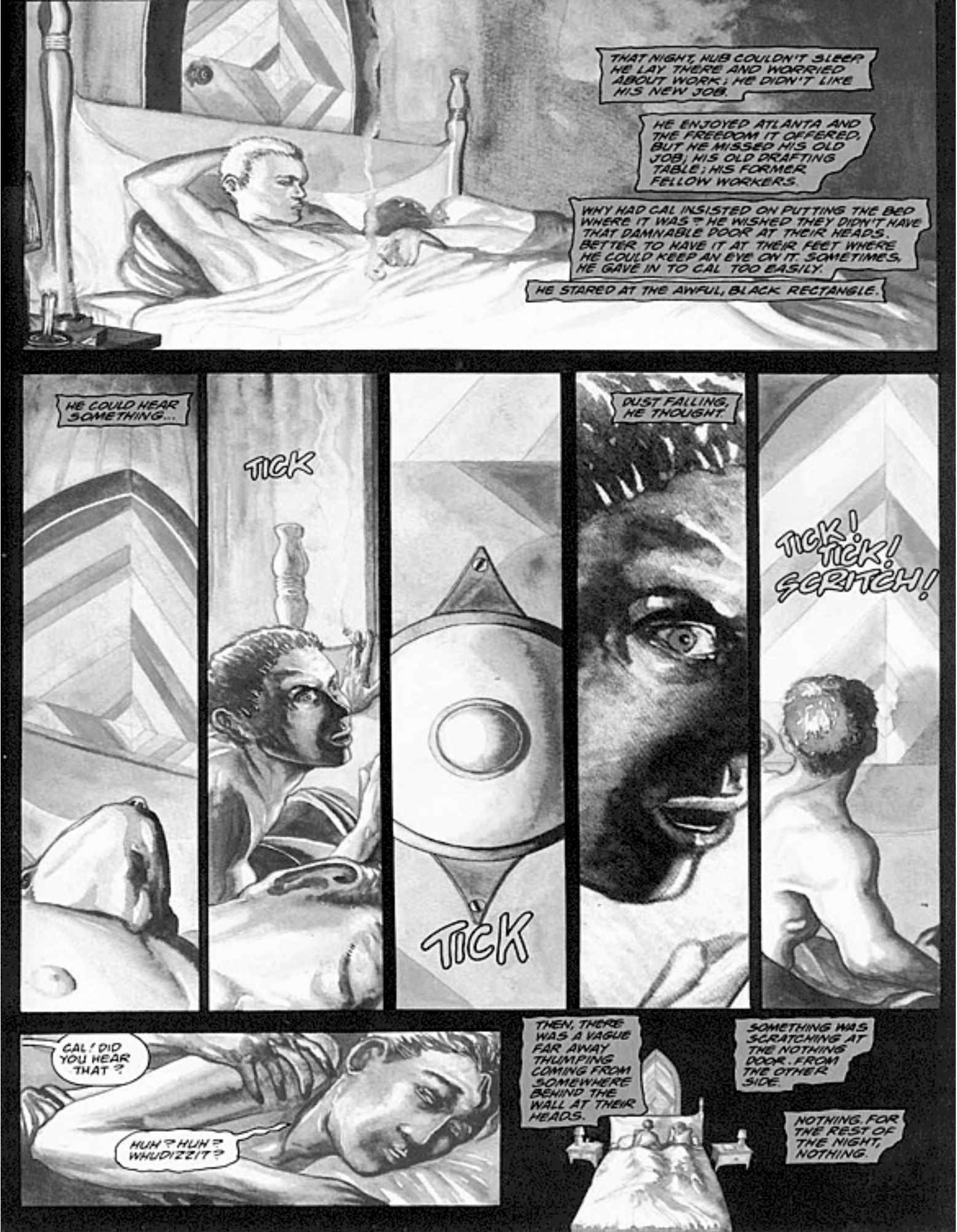
CAL WAS MES-MERISED BY THE BRIGHT BITS THAT LAY STACKED SO NEATLY ON THE FLOOR, AS IF WAITING.

WHERE DOES THAT GO?
IF HUB REMEMBERED CORRECTLY, THERE SHOULDN'T BE ANY-THING ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THEM BE-SIDES THE SHELL OF THE BUILDING.

THAT'S JUST A SCULPTURE A PREVIOUS TENANT BUILT. WE LEFT IT SINCE IT SEEMS TO FIT THE ROOM SO WELL. IF YOU WANT US TO, WE CAN HAVE IT REMOVED.
OH, NO! I LIKE IT! LEAVE IT THERE.
AND THAT... WELL, IT DOESN'T GO ANYWHERE. THAT IS, IT'S JUST A WALL. IT USED TO LEAD TO ANOTHER PART OF THE BUILDING, BUT THAT SECTION ISN'T EVEN THERE ANYMORE.
JUST BRICK AND GIRDER BUTTRESSES, NOW.
AND WHY DID THEY LEAVE THE DOOR LIKE THAT?
THAT'S ONE I CAN'T ANSWER.
IF YOU'D LIKE, I CAN ASK SOMEONE TO FIND OUT. BUT I REALLY DON'T THINK IT AFFECTS THE ROOM IN A BAD WAY.
IF YOU WANT MY OPINION AS THE MANAGER, I THINK THIS IS THE NICEST APARTMENT IN THE BUILDING. YOU'RE ON THE TOP FLOOR, LAST ON THE WING. NO NEIGHBORS ABOVE, AND ONLY ONE TO YOUR WEST, AND A GREAT VIEW OF ATLANTA.
WELL, IT IS A NICE APARTMENT. WHAT DO YOU THINK, CAL? TIRED OF LOOKING AROUND?
DEFINITELY. SICK AND TIRED.
WELL, THEN. WHERE DO WE SIGN?

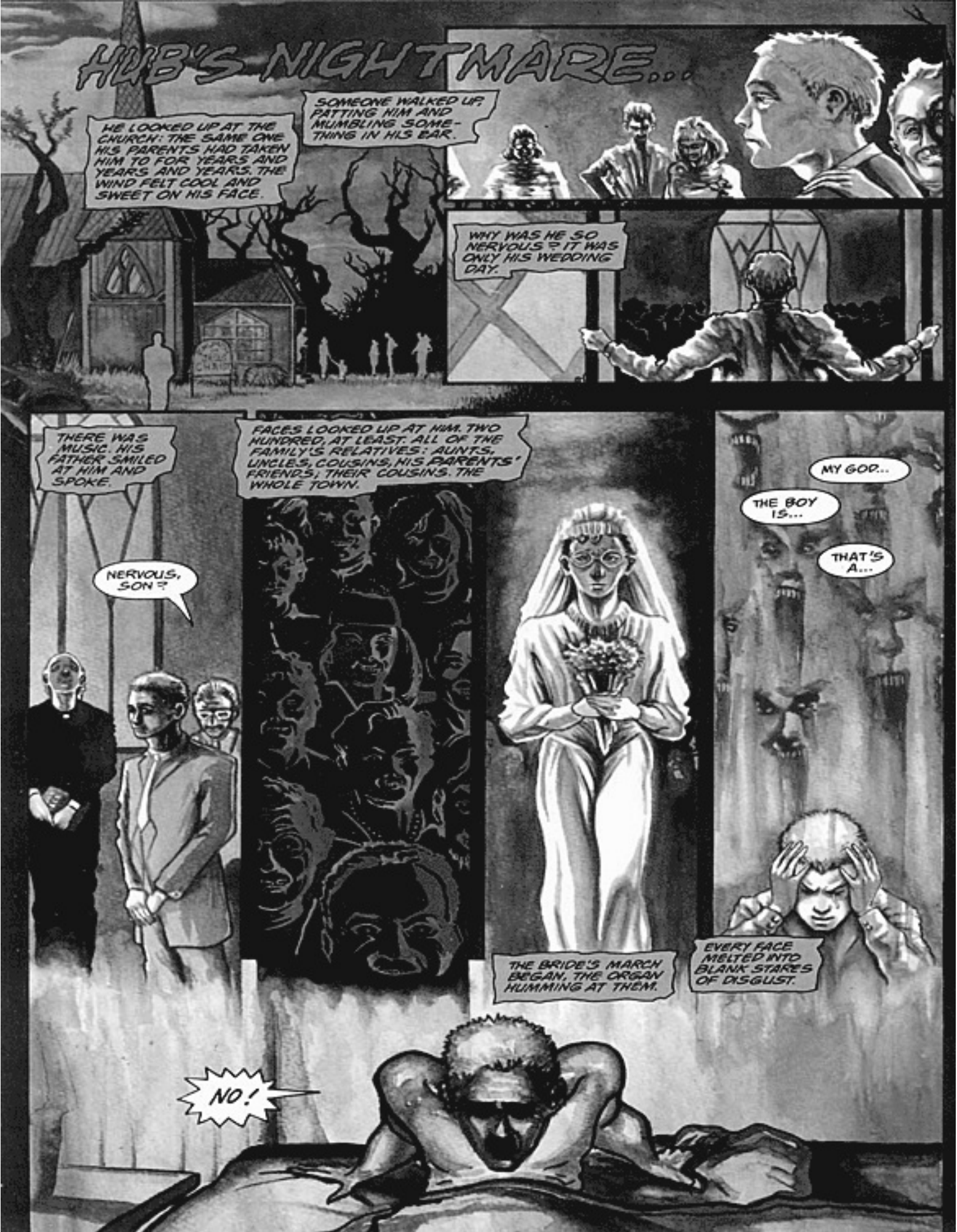
LINGERING


HUB GOT HOME FIRST. AS HE ALWAYS SEEMED TO DO. HE WAS MET BY SILENCE.
THE THICK WALLS DID A GOOD JOB OF MUFFLING THE BUSY STREETS. EVEN PEACHTREE WAS NOTHING MORE THAN A BARE HUM THROUGH ALL OF THAT BRICK AND MORTAR.
IT WAS SO QUIET.
HE HEARD HIS OWN HARD SOLES CLACK ACROSS THE FLOOR.
HE HEARD A THUMPING TO HIS RIGHT: FOOTSTEPS THAT WENT CLATTERING ALONG IN THE APARTMENT ON THE OTHER SIDE.
THERE WAS NO APARTMENT ON THAT SIDE.
CAL? ARE YOU HOME?
NO ANSWER.
DAMN, CAL! YOU STARTLED ME! WHY DIDN'T YOU ANSWER, JUST NOW?
I DIDN'T HEAR YOU. BEEN TRYING TO WORK THIS DAMNED PUZZLE. I BUMPED INTO THE REALTOR THIS AFTERNOON AT LUNCH, AND SHE ASKED IF WE HAD FIGURED IT OUT YET.
JUST THOUGHT I'D GIVE IT A TRY.


THAT NIGHT, HUB COULDN'T SLEEP. HE LAY THERE AND WORRIED ABOUT WORK; HE DIDN'T LIKE HIS NEW JOB.
HE ENJOYED ATLANTA AND THE FREEDOM IT OFFERED, BUT HE MISSED HIS OLD JOB; HIS OLD DRAFTING TABLE; HIS FORMER FELLOW WORKERS.
WHY HAD CAL INSISTED ON PUTTING THE BED WHERE IT WAS? HE WISHED THEY DIDN'T HAVE THAT DAMNABLE DOOR AT THEIR HEADS. BETTER TO HAVE IT AT THEIR FEET WHERE HE COULD KEEP AN EYE ON IT. SOMETIMES, HE GAVE IN TO CAL TOO EASILY.
HE STARED AT THE AWFUL, BLACK RECTANGLE.
HE COULD HEAR SOMETHING...
TICK
TICK
DUST FALLING, HE THOUGHT.
TICK! TICK! SCRITCH!
CAL! DID YOU HEAR THAT?
HUH? HUH? WHUDIZZIT?
THEN, THERE WAS A VAGUE FAR AWAY THUMPING COMING FROM SOMEWHERE BEHIND THE WALL AT THEIR HEADS.
SOMETHING WAS SCRATCHING AT THE NOTHING DOOR. FROM THE OTHER SIDE.
NOTHING. FOR THE REST OF THE NIGHT, NOTHING.

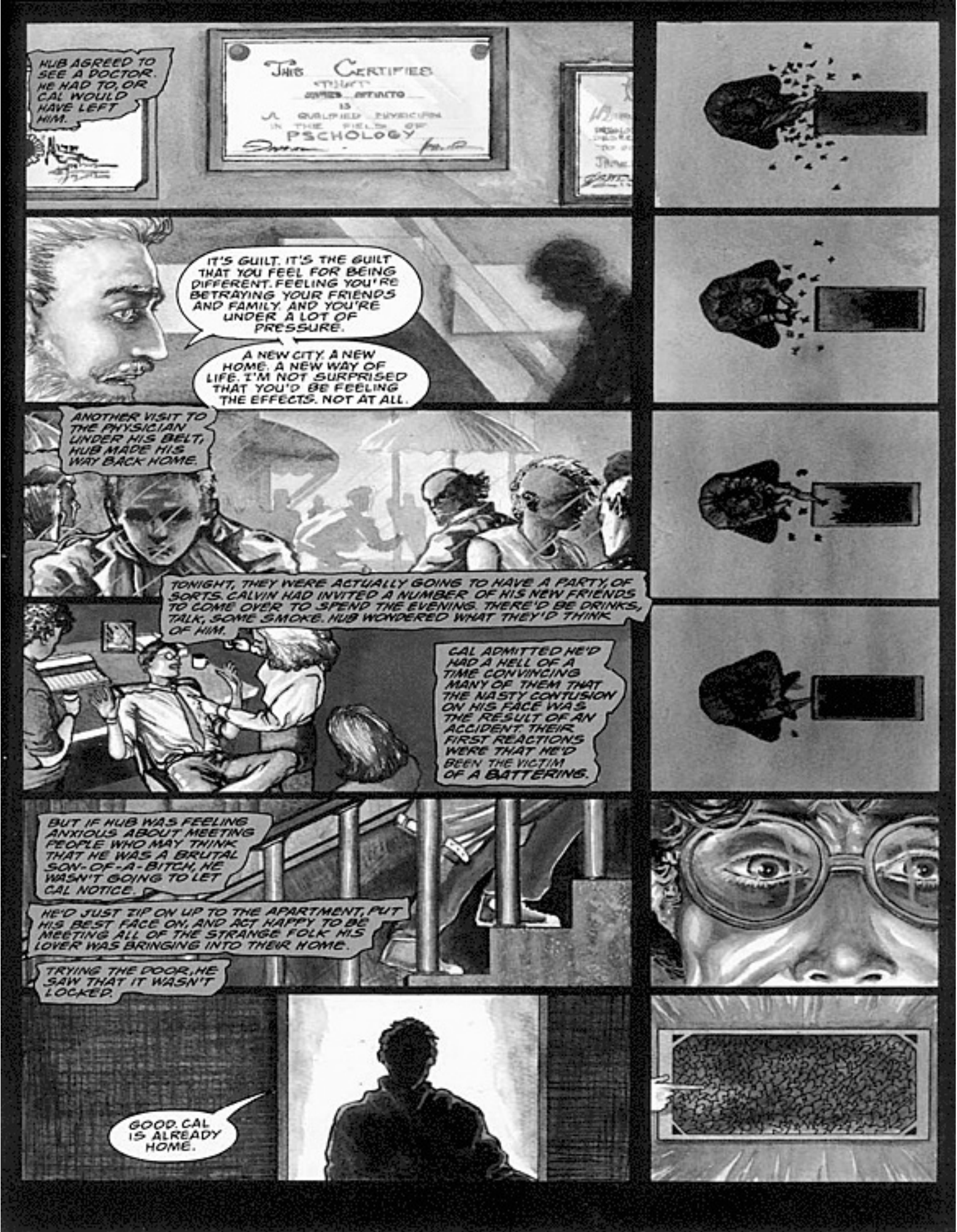
COME ON, HUB. GIVE ME A HAND. YOU'RE MUCH BETTER AT COLOR THAN I AM.
NO, THANKS. I DON'T FEEL LIKE PUTTING IT TOGETHER.
I REALLY WISH YOU'D GIVE US A HAND WITH IT. I FEEL LIKE I'VE ALMOST GOT IT FIGURED OUT; IT'S NOT SO MUCH FITTING THE PARTS TOGETHER, AS BLENDING THE COLORS. IT'S WEIRD. I MEAN LOOK HOW THE GREEN ONES I PUT IN YESTERDAY BLENDED IN WITH THE RED ONES. WILD.
WISH YOU'D HELP US WITH IT, HUB.
US?!
WHAT THE HELL IS THIS "US" CRAP? I HAVEN'T SEEN HER ONCE LEND A HAND! SHE ISN'T HELPING YOU WITH THE DAMNED THING ANY MORE THAN I AM!
SHE'S JUST THE BUILDING MANAGER--WHY IS SHE HANGING AROUND ENCOURAGING YOU TO WASTE YOUR TIME ON THE DAMNED THING ANYWAY, HUH?
THERE WAS A MOMENT OF AWKWARD SILENCE.
PERHAPS I'D BETTER LEAVE.
WHO THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU ARE? YOU CAN'T TREAT OUR GUESTS LIKE THAT! NO WONDER WE'RE HAVING SUCH A HARD TIME MAKING FRIENDS AROUND HERE! IF IT WEREN'T FOR YOUR LOUSY ATTITUDE, WE'D HAVE MET A LOT MORE PEOPLE SINCE WE MOVED TO ATLANTA!
HE HEARD THEM MUTTERING TO ONE ANOTHER AS THEY VANISHED TOWARD THE FRONT OF THE APARTMENT.
SKRITCH

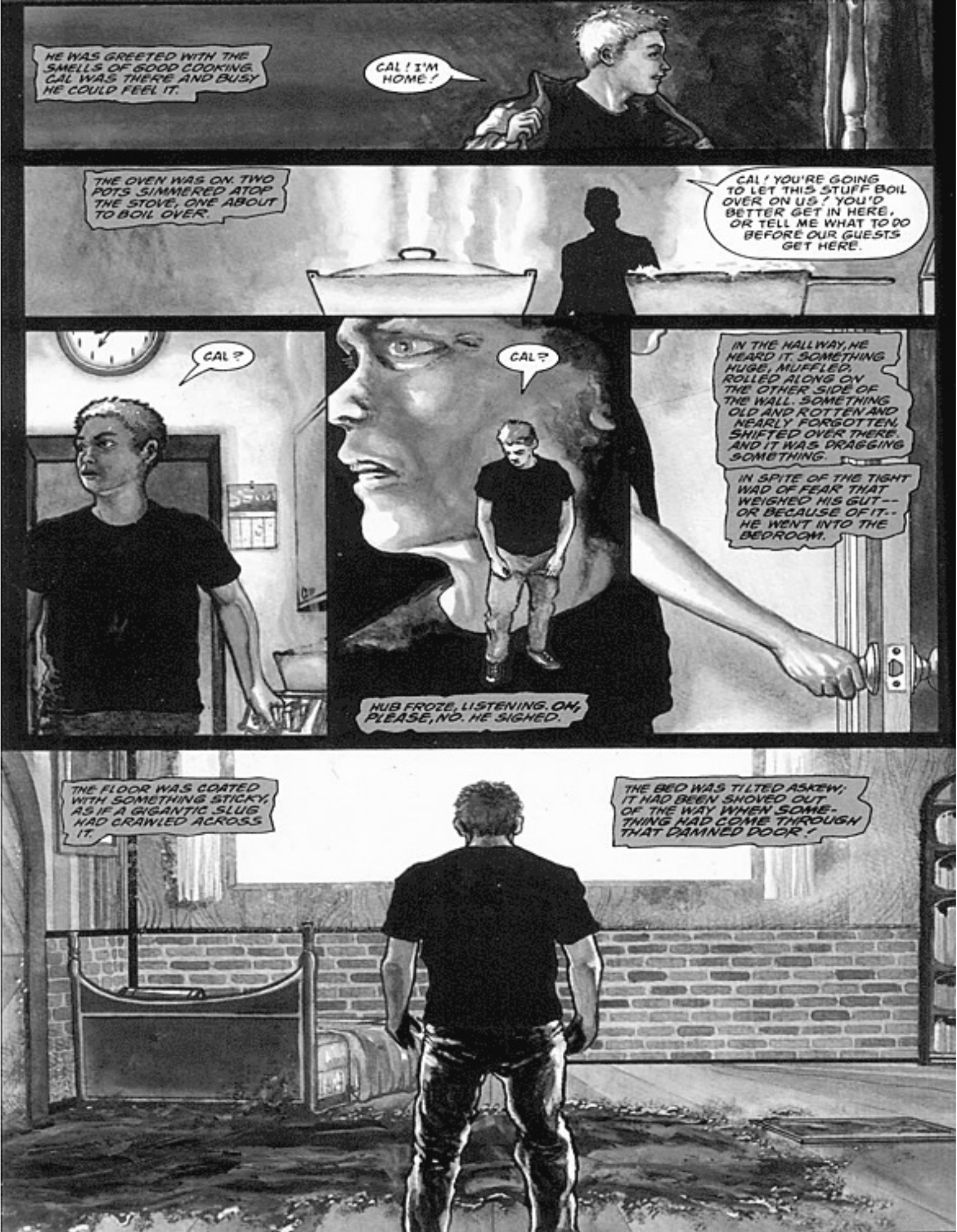
CAL HAD BEEN TRYING VERY HARD TO COMPLETE THE PUZZLE. IF HIS LOVER HAD A BETTER EYE FOR COLOR, HE'D HAVE GOTTEN AS FAR AS HE HAD MUCH SOONER.
HUB COULD HAVE TOLD HIM WHAT HE'D BEEN DOING WRONG, BUT HE HADN'T. HE WASN'T SURE WHY; HE JUST DIDN'T LIKE IT...
CAL HAD BEEN ALMOST OBSESSED WITH THE THING IN RECENT DAYS. EVER SINCE SHE HAD BUMPED INTO HIM THAT DAY, ASKING HIM IF HE'D TRIED IT, YET.
STILL, HUB REALIZED THAT HE WAS BEING PETULANT ABOUT THE WHOLE THING. HE KNEW CAL WELL ENOUGH SO THAT HE SHOULDN'T BE JEALOUS. PERHAPS...
HE COULD SEE, RIGHT AWAY, WHERE CAL HAD GONE WRONG.
SKRITCH SKATCH
THE DOOR WAS A DARK PRESENCE IN THE ROOM WITH HIM. HE REALIZED HOW AFRAID OF IT HE WAS.
HE SCATTERED THE WORK HE'D DONE.


HUB'S NIGHTMARE...
HE LOOKED UP AT THE CHURCH: THE SAME ONE HIS PARENTS HAD TAKEN HIM TO FOR YEARS AND YEARS AND YEARS. THE WIND FELT COOL AND SWEET ON HIS FACE.
SOMEONE WALKED UP, PATTING HIM AND MUMBLING SOMETHING IN HIS EAR.
WHY WAS HE SO NERVOUS? IT WAS ONLY HIS WEDDING DAY.
THERE WAS MUSIC. HIS FATHER SMILED AT HIM AND SPOKE.
NERVOUS, SON?
FACES LOOKED UP AT HIM. TWO HUNDRED, AT LEAST. ALL OF THE FAMILY'S RELATIVES: AUNTS, UNCLES, COUSINS, HIS PARENTS' FRIENDS, THEIR COUSINS. THE WHOLE TOWN.
THE BRIDE'S MARCH BEGAN, THE ORGAN HUMMING AT THEM.
MY GOD...
THE BOY IS...
THAT'S A...
EVERY FACE MELTED INTO BLANK STARES OF DISGUST.
NO!

HUB DID HIS DAMNDEST NOT TO GET HOME BEFORE CALVIN DID. NOT ANYMORE.
HE WAS CONTENT TO FIND AN EMPTY BENCH ON THE STREET AND SIT ALONE UNTIL HE FELT THAT CAL HAD HAD ENOUGH TIME TO MAKE THE DRIVE BACK TO THE APARTMENT.
SOMETIMES IT WOULD BE DARK, TWILIGHT BEARING TO BLACK BEFORE HE'D FEEL THAT HE COULD HEAD TOWARD THEIR HOME.
HE JUST DION'T WANT TO GO IN ALONE.
CAL THOUGHT THAT HE WAS BEING SILLY (AT LEAST).
"IT'S JUST YOUR NERVES, HUB," HE SAID.
SO. HE'D. JUST.
SIT. THERE. AND.
WAIT.

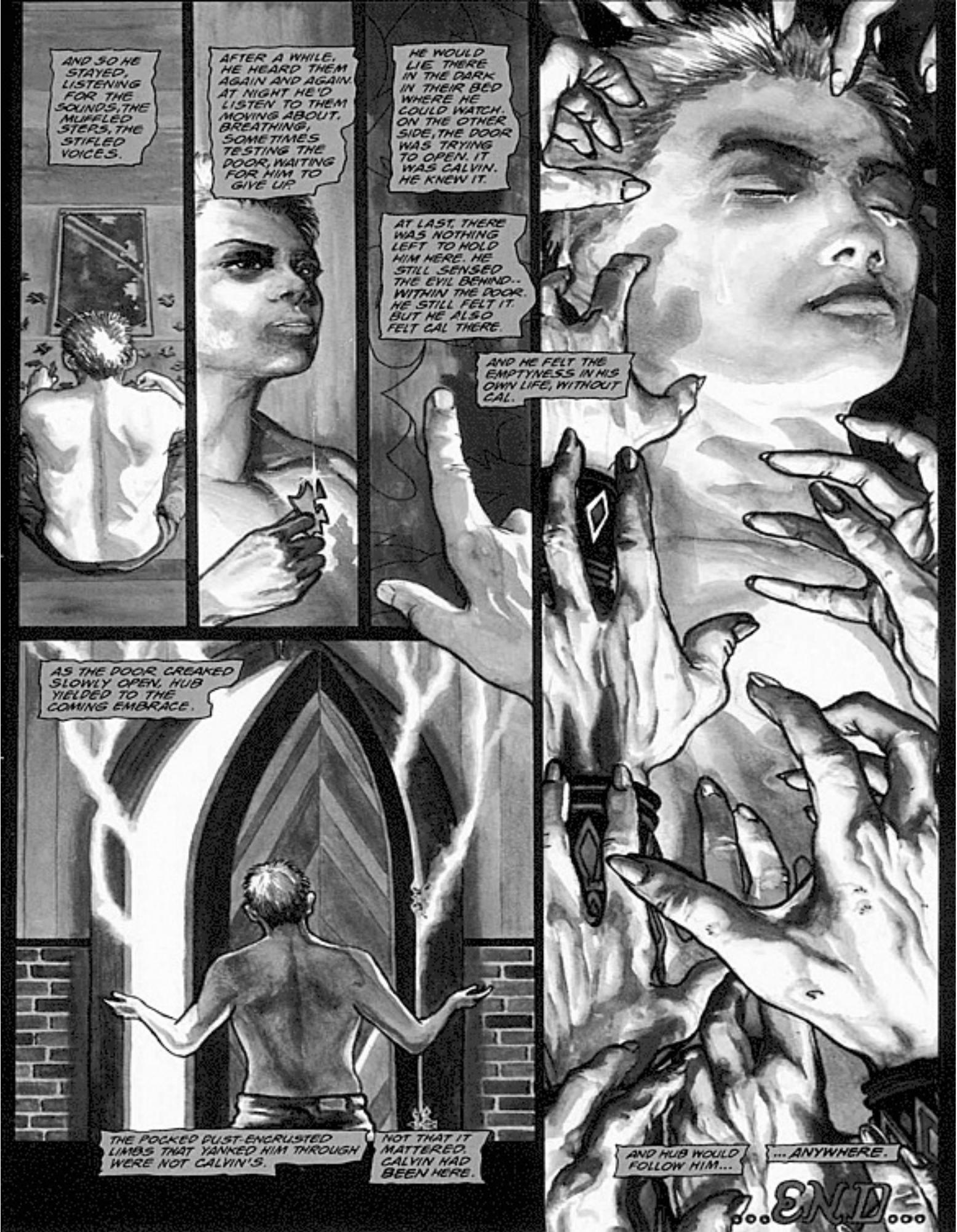
UNTIL...
WHY DID YOU DO THAT ? I ALMOST HAD IT FINISHED!
I'M SICK OF IT! YOU'RE OBSESSED WITH IT AND I'M SICK OF IT.!
NO! THAT'S NOT IT, AT ALL! YOU'RE JEALOUS! EVERY TIME I WANT TO HAVE SOME FRIENDS OVER, YOU GET LIKE THIS! EVERY TIME I BRING UP THE SUBJECT OF HAVING A PARTY HERE, YOU FLY INTO THIS KIND OF REACTION.
WHERE ARE YOU GOING ?
I'M GOING OUT FOR A WHILE TO LET YOU STEW ALONE.
HUB HEARD CAL SLAM THE DOOR BEHIND HIM AS HE LEFT.
HE COULDN'T STAND IT ANYMORE. HE COULDN'T. YANKING, HE PULLED THE WEIGHT OF THE BIG BED AWAY FROM THE GOD-DAMNED DOOR.
HE STARED AT IT.
GOD.
REALLY. IT COULDN'T GO ANYWHERE. HUB HAD GONE OUT ON THE WALK JUST AS THE MANAGER HAD TOLD HIM TO. AND HE HAD SEEN WHERE THE WING HAD BEEN SHORN OFF AND BRACES PUT IN PLACE.
JUST A BLANK WALL WITH NICE COLUMNS OF NEW BRICK TO COVER THE METAL GIRDERS. THERE WAS NOTHING THERE, AT ALL.
EXCEPT THAT THERE WAS. HE'D HEARD THEM. SPEAKING. ALTHOUGH HE COULDN'T UNDERSTAND WHAT THEY WERE MUTTERING TO THEMSELVES IN THERE.
BEHIND HIM, THERE WAS A PRESENCE.
CRACK
CAL! NO!
I DIDN'T HEAR YOU COME BACK IN!
DAMN YOU, HUB! WHAT THE HELL—?


HUB AGREED TO SEE A DOCTOR. HE HAD TO, OR CAL WOULD HAVE LEFT HIM.
THIS CERTIFIES
IS A QUALIFIED PHYSICIAN IN THE FIELD OF PSCHOLOGY
IT'S GUILT. IT'S THE GUILT THAT YOU FEEL FOR BEING DIFFERENT. FEELING YOU'RE BETRAYING YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY. AND YOU'RE UNDER A LOT OF PRESSURE.
A NEW CITY. A NEW HOME. A NEW WAY OF LIFE. I'M NOT SURPRISED THAT YOU'D BE FEELING THE EFFECTS. NOT AT ALL.
ANOTHER VISIT TO THE PHYSICIAN UNDER HIS BELT, HUB MADE HIS WAY BACK HOME.
TONIGHT, THEY WERE ACTUALLY GOING TO HAVE A PARTY, OF SORTS. CALVIN HAD INVITED A NUMBER OF HIS NEW FRIENDS TO COME OVER TO SPEND THE EVENING. THERE'D BE DRINKS, TALK, SOME SMOKE. HUB WONDERED WHAT THEY'D THINK OF HIM.
CAL ADMITTED HE'D HAD A HELL OF A TIME CONVINCING MANY OF THEM THAT THE NASTY CONTUSION ON HIS FACE WAS THE RESULT OF AN ACCIDENT. THEIR FIRST REACTIONS WERE THAT HE'D BEEN THE VICTIM OF A BATTERING.
BUT IF HUB WAS FEELING ANXIOUS ABOUT MEETING PEOPLE WHO MAY THINK THAT HE WAS A BRUTAL SON-OF-A-BITCH, HE WASN'T GOING TO LET CAL NOTICE.
HE'D JUST ZIP ON UP TO THE APARTMENT, PUT HIS BEST FACE ON, AND ACT HAPPY TO BE MEETING ALL OF THE STRANGE FOLK HIS LOVER WAS BRINGING INTO THEIR HOME.
TRYING THE DOOR, HE SAW THAT IT WASN'T LOCKED.
GOOD. CAL IS ALREADY HOME.


HE WAS GREETED WITH THE SMELLS OF GOOD COOKING. CAL WAS THERE AND BUSY HE COULD FEEL IT.
CAL! I'M HOME!
THE OVEN WAS ON. TWO POTS SIMMERED ATOP THE STOVE, ONE ABOUT TO BOIL OVER.
CAL! YOU'RE GOING TO LET THIS STUFF BOIL OVER ON US! YOU'D BETTER GET IN HERE, OR TELL ME WHAT TO DO BEFORE OUR GUESTS GET HERE.
CAL?
CAL?
IN THE HALLWAY, HE HEARD IT. SOMETHING HUGE, MUFFLED, ROLLED ALONG ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WALL. SOMETHING OLD AND ROTTEN AND NEARLY FORGOTTEN, SHIFTED OVER THERE. AND IT WAS DRAGGING SOMETHING.
IN SPITE OF THE TIGHT WAD OF FEAR THAT WEIGHED HIS GUT -- OR BECAUSE OF IT -- HE WENT INTO THE BEDROOM.
HUB FROZE, LISTENING. OH, PLEASE, NO. HE SIGHED.
THE FLOOR WAS COATED WITH SOMETHING STICKY, AS IF A GIGANTIC SLUG HAD CRAWLED ACROSS IT.
THE BED WAS TILTED ASKEW; IT HAD BEEN SHOVED OUT OF THE WAY WHEN SOMETHING HAD COME THROUGH THAT DAMNED DOOR!

CAL! CAL!
ANSWER ME! PLEASE!
PLEASE DON'T BE GONE!
HE STUMBLED BACK TO THE KITCHEN. IT WOULDN'T HURT TO LOOK AGAIN.
MAYBE HE WAS THERE AND I JUST MISSED HIM.
HE WENT TO THE PHONE, STARING AT THE NOTE PAD THEY KEPT THERE. THERE WAS NOTHING, NO SCRIBBLED MESSAGE THAT CAL HAD STEPPED OUT FOR A MOMENT LEAVING THE FOOD COOKING AND WOULD YOU WATCH IT, PLEASE.
HIS
HIS
BUT CAL WOULDN'T DO THAT. NOT AND LEAVE THE STOVE GOING, AND HIS CAR KEYS SITTING ON THE TABLE WITH THE DOOR UNLOCKED.
GOD! HE'S GONE!
HE CALLED CALVIN'S WORK NUMBER. NO ANSWER. HE DIALED THE HANDFUL OF CAL'S FRIENDS WHOSE NUMBERS HE KNEW. NOTHING. MOST OF THEM WERE ON THEIR WAY OVER.
HE WENT DOWN TO THE PARKING DECK WHERE CAL'S CAR WAS. THERE IT SAT. NO CALVIN.
HE WENT BACK TO THE APARTMENT.
AND WAITED FOR THE STRANGERS TO ARRIVE.

NO ONE FOUND CAL. NO ONE COULD.
THE POLICE SUSPECTED HUB. HE WAS SURE OF THAT. BUT, THEY COULDN'T PROVE ANYTHING. NOT ANY OF THE RUMORS OF VIOLENT BEHAVIOR FROM CAL'S FRIENDS OR FELLOW WORKERS WERE ENOUGH TO HAVE HIM ARRESTED AND CHARGED.
SO THEY'D MERELY CHALKED IT UP AS ANOTHER MISSING PERSON, AND HUB AS ANOTHER CRAZY FAGGOT.
HUB KNEW WHERE CALVIN WAS. OH, YES. CAL WAS ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THAT GODDAMNED DOOR WHERE HUB COULDN'T GET TO HIM.
SOMETHING HEAVY AND WET AS DEATH AND JEALOUSY HAD SHAMBLED THROUGH AND HAD TAKEN HIM. HE KNEW.
BUT HUB WASN'T GOING ANYWHERE. HE WAS GOING TO LIVE THERE AND WAIT FOR CALVIN TO COME BACK. IF HUB JUST STAYED THERE, LIVED THERE, AND LOVED ENOUGH, CAL'D HAVE TO COME BACK.
KNOCK! KNOCK!
HE'D HAVE TO.
HAVE YOU TRIED WORKING THE PUZZLE?


AND SO HE STAYED, LISTENING FOR THE SOUNDS, THE MUFFLED STIRS, THE STIFLED VOICES.
AFTER A WHILE, HE HEARD THEM AGAIN AND AGAIN. AT NIGHT HE'D LISTEN TO THEM MOVING ABOUT, BREATHING, SOMETIMES TESTING THE DOOR, WAITING FOR HIM TO GIVE UP.
HE WOULD LIE THERE IN THE DARK IN THEIR BED WHERE HE COULD WATCH. ON THE OTHER SIDE, THE DOOR WAS TRYING TO OPEN. IT WAS CALVIN. HE KNEW IT.
AT LAST, THERE WAS NOTHING LEFT TO HOLD HIM HERE. HE STILL SENSED THE EVIL BEHIND.. WITHIN THE DOOR. HE STILL FELT IT. BUT HE ALSO FELT CAL THERE.
AND HE FELT THE EMPTYNESS IN HIS OWN LIFE, WITHOUT CAL.
AS THE DOOR CREAKED SLOWLY OPEN, HUB YIELDED TO THE COMING EMBRACE.
THE POCKED DUST-ENCRUSTED LIMBS THAT YANKED HIM THROUGH WERE NOT CALVIN'S.
NOT THAT IT MATTERED. CALVIN HAD BEEN HERE.
AND HUB WOULD FOLLOW HIM...
... ANYWHERE.
...END...

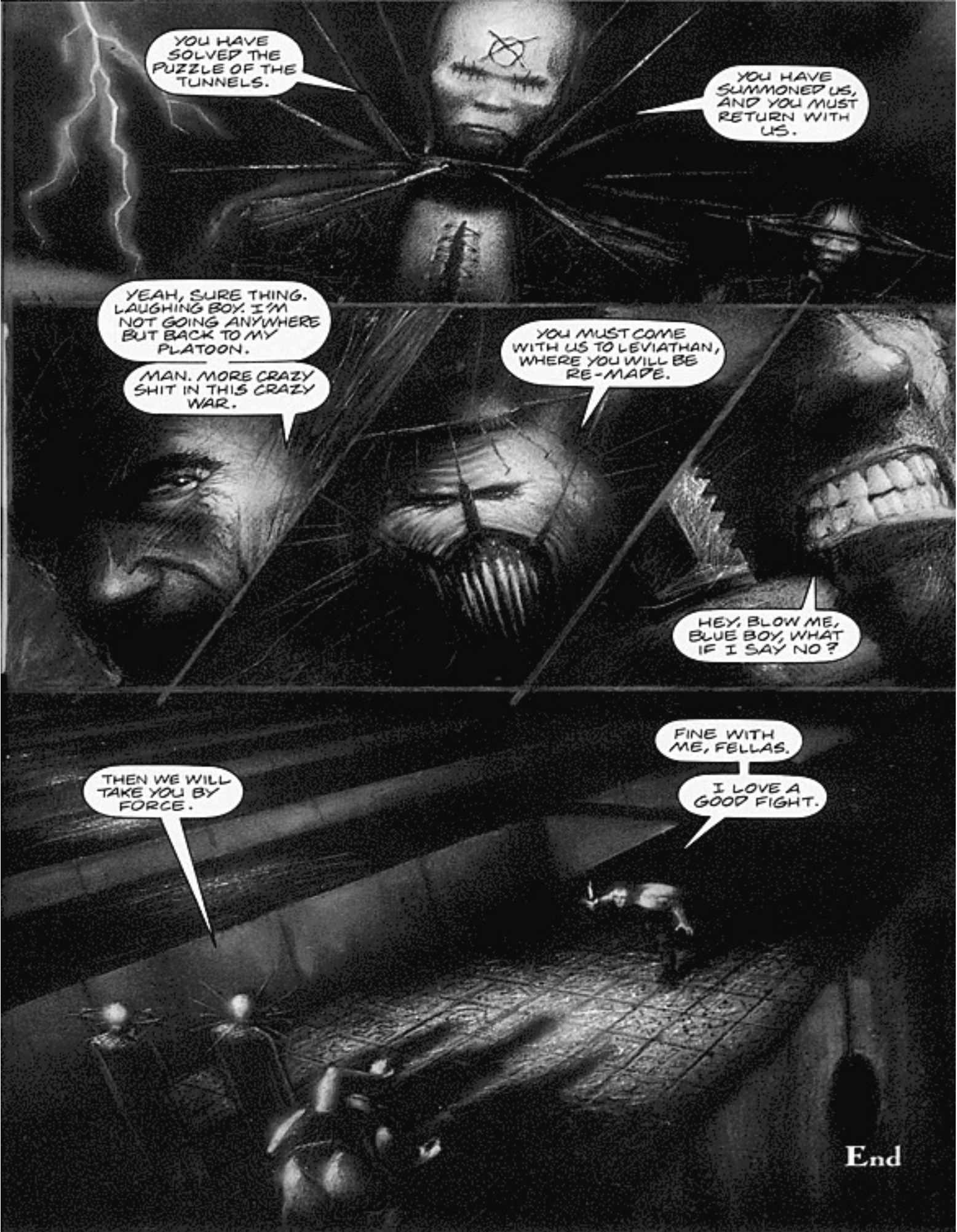
I. BLOODWORTH '90

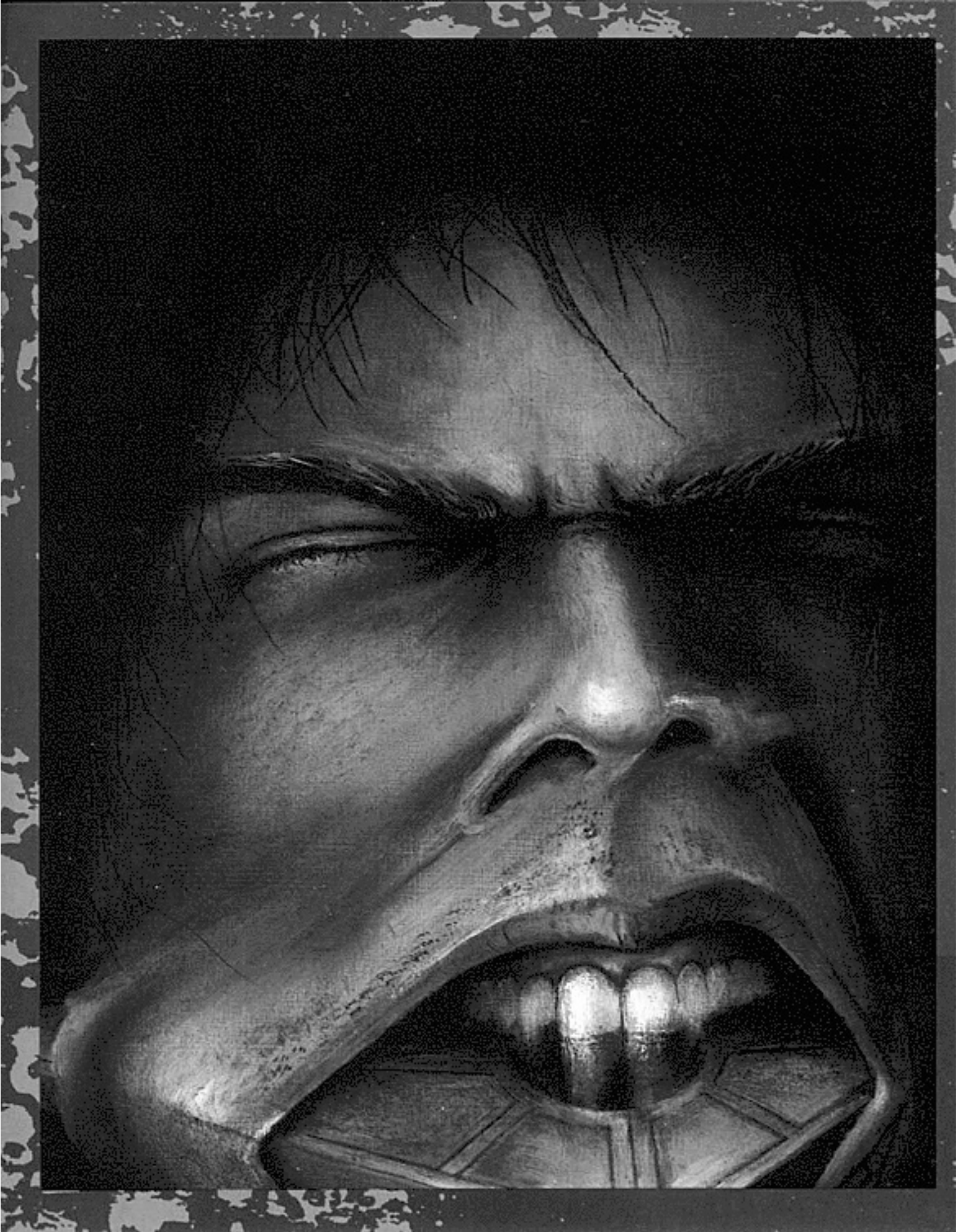
TUNNEL OF LOVE
Erik Saltzgaber
writer
Joe Barruso
artist
Jade Moede
letterer
SHIT.
WHAT IS IT SERGEANT? WHAT'S THE HOLD UP?
TUNNEL, SIR.
WELL ISN'T THIS VIETNAM WAR THE GODDAMNEST THING YOU EVER SAW?
SOLDIERS TUNNELIN' UNDER THE EARTH LIKE WORMS. HOW ABOUT THAT?
WELL I GUESS YOU GOOD OL' BOYS KNOW WHAT THIS MEANS. OUR BODY COUNT'S FOR SHIT THIS WEEK I BELIEVE I'M GONNA NEED ME A VOLUNTEER TO GO DOWN INTO THAT TUNNEL AND BRING ME BACK SOME GOOK'S EARS.
C'MON NOW. STEP UP.
I'LL DO IT.
WELL THAT'S WHAT I LIKE TO HEAR.
SOUNDS KINDA LIKE FUN.

ATKINS, THAT YOU? BOY, WHAT TOOK YOU SO LONG TO SPEAK UP? NOT LIKE YOU TO HANG BACK LIKE THAT.
CLICK
MIND IF I BORROW YOUR SIDE ARM, SIR?
HELL, NO!
GO GET ME A COUNT BOY. I WANNA HEAR 'EM SCREAMING CLEAN THROUGH THE DIRT.
GO GET THEM DOGGIES!
SEE YOU AROUND SIR.
SIR, SHOULDN'T WE HAVE SENT SOMEONE ELSE ALONG WITH HIM?
AW, SHIT SERGEANT, AIN'T NO ONE HUNDRED GOOKS COULD STAND UP TO ATKINS IF HE WAS BUCK NAKED IN THE MIDDLE OF A FIELD AND HAD NOTHIN' BUT A BITTY LITTLE PEN KNIFE.
THAT BOY'LL BE OKAY. LET'S JUST RELAX AND LET HIM DO WHAT HE DOES BEST.
THIS PLACE IS LIKE A MAZE. C'MON, FELLAS WHERE'S THE PARTY AT...

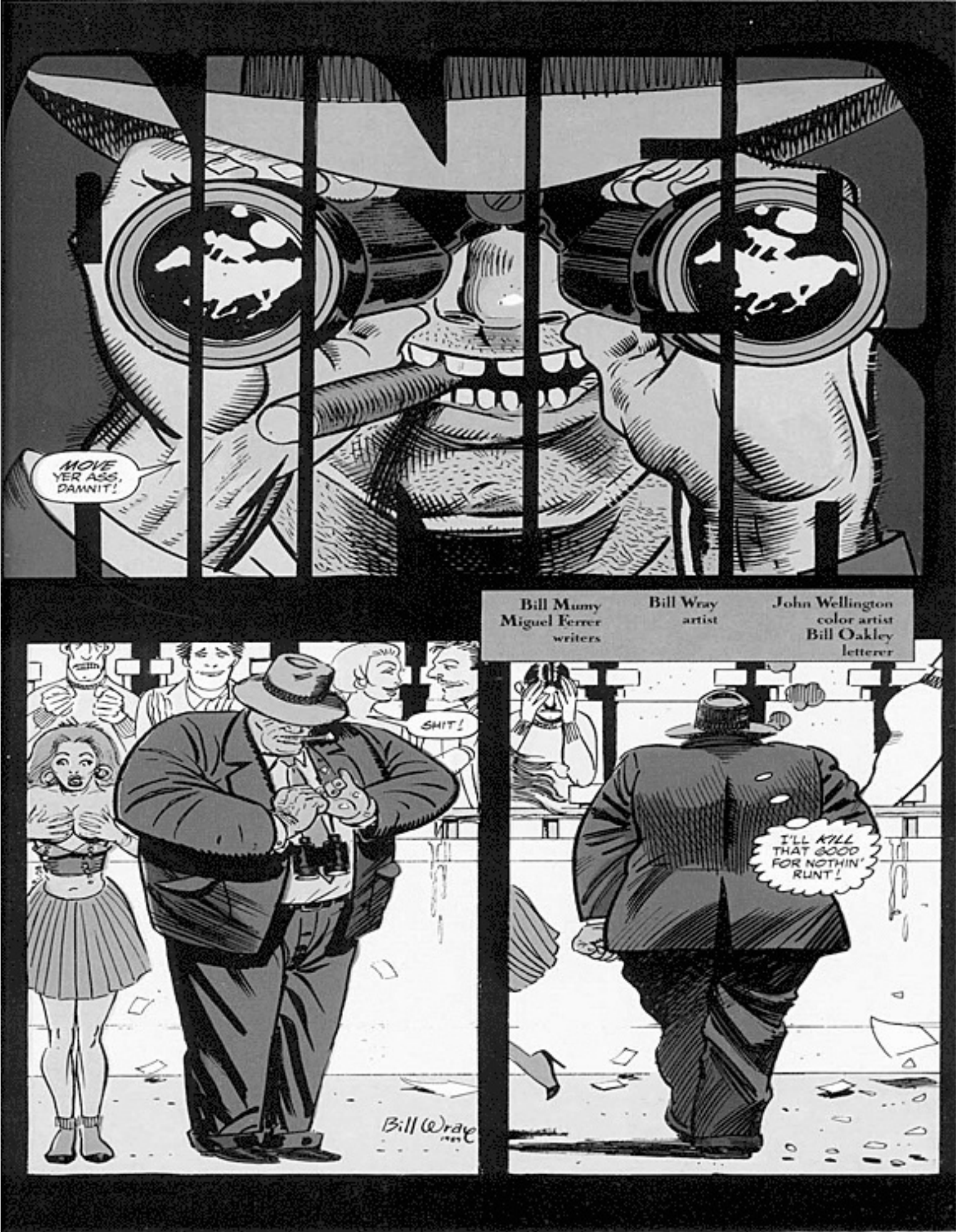
IT'S SHOWTIME FOLKS...
KKKiiiAAAiii!!
BLAM BLAM BLAM
YARG!
AAARRRGGHH!!
AAAiiieee!!
SORRY, FELLAS, JUST DOING MY JOB...
WHERE ARE THE REST OF YOU?
WE ARE EVERY-WHERE, DOG. YOU WILL NEVER GET OUT OF HERE ALIVE, G.I. WE ARE SPECIAL. WE ARE PROTECTED BY THE CENO--
KKRRRAAAK
SORRY, HEARD IT ALL BEFORE. SAY GOOD-NIGHT, GRACIE
LIEUTENANT'LL HAVE TO BE SATISFIED WITH SIX.
I GOTTA FIND MY WAY OUT OF HERE...

SHIT! I COULD SWEAR THIS PLACE IS SHIFTING ON ME. I KNOW I'VE BEEN THROUGH HERE BEFORE.
JESUS CHRIST! THIS LOOKS FAMILIAR TOO. FEELS LIKE SOME CRAZY PATTERN.
SCHUK SCHUK SCHUK
GODDAMMIT! THIS IS THE THIRD TIME I'VE BEEN HERE! WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON?
OH MAN NOW WHAT?


YOU HAVE SOLVED THE PUZZLE OF THE TUNNELS.
YOU HAVE SUMMONED US, AND YOU MUST RETURN WITH US.
YEAH, SURE THING. LAUGHING BOY. I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE BUT BACK TO MY PLATOON.
MAN. MORE CRAZY SHIT IN THIS CRAZY WAR.
YOU MUST COME WITH US TO LEVIATHAN, WHERE YOU WILL BE RE-MADE.
HEY, BLOW ME, BLUE BOY, WHAT IF I SAY NO?
FINE WITH ME, FELLAS.
I LOVE A GOOD FIGHT.
THEN WE WILL TAKE YOU BY FORCE.
End



C'MON, YOU SON OF A BITCH!
AND THEY'RE OFF! IT'S DINAH GIRL IN FRONT BY A LENGTH, FOLLOWED CLOSELY BY CRANKY DAVE... SPANK ME AND LILIANA'S SURPRISE AROUND THE BEND WITH TURBO BUFFY AND KANDU TRAILING... COMING IN LAST HEAT, IT'S DINAH GIRL BY A NOSE WITH SPANK ME AND CRANKY DAVE...
YEAH, DINAH GIRL!
ALL RIGHT! WOOOEEE!


MOVE YER ASS, DAMNIT!
Bill Mumy
Miguel Ferrer
writers
Bill Wray
artist
John Wellington
color artist
Bill Oakley
letterer
SHIT!
Bill Wray
I'LL KILL THAT GOOD FOR NOTHIN' RUNT!

...STUPID...
...USELESS...
...ANIMALS!

HEY!? 'SAPNIN'?
:UNNGHH!:
YOU'RE WORTH-LESS!
NEIGH
WAK
NOW YOU WANNA RUN, HUH?!
NEIGH
WAK
YOU LIKE THAT?
WAK
WAK

CASSIDY! THAT'S ENOUGH!
NHHGH
THIS HORSE AIN'T FIT FOR DOG FOOD!
STOP IT FOR GOD'S SAKE, CASSIDY!
CALM DOWN, MAN!
GET YOUR HANDS OFFA ME!
IT'S MY HORSE, AND I'LL DO WHAT I DAMN WELL PLEASE!
IF THIS HAPPENS ONE MORE TIME, SO HELP ME CASSIDY, WE'LL PETITION THE STEWARDS TO HAVE YOU BARRED FROM THIS TRACK!
YOU JUST BOUGHT YOURSELF A LOT OF TROUBLE, HAMILL. I'LL SETTLE UP WITH YOU LATER.
WHEN IT'S MORE PRIVATE.
WEISS! I WANNA TALK TO YOU IN THE TACK ROOM! NOW!

YOU SHOULDA' GIVEN THAT LOUSY NAG A BIGGER HIT OF COKE, WEISS!
IT'S LIKE I TOLD YOU MR. CASSIDY, YOU BEEN WORKING THE HORSE TOO HARD... HE'S JUST PLAIN USED UP!
ALL THE COKE IN THE WORLD WON'T CHANGE THAT! YOU KEEP THIS UP AND YOU'RE GONNA HAVE A DEAD RACE-HORSE ON YOUR HANDS...
AND I WON'T BE A PARTY TO IT!
YEAH? WELL YOU'RE FIRED ASSHOLE!
GET YOUR STUFF AND GET THE HELL OUTTA HERE!
WAP!
...TELL ME WHAT TO DO!
SLAM!
SCREW 'EM ALL.
WARROOM!

THE NEXT MORNING; SHORTLY AFTER DAWN...
HEY CASSIDY, HOW ABOUT A FIN?
GET OUTTA MY FACE, WINE HEAD. YOU SMELL LIKE SHIT!
WAIT, I HAVE SOMETHING YOU'LL REALLY LIKE HERE ...A ONE OF A KIND.
I ALREADY GOT A STOPWATCH.
NOT LIKE THIS!
IT MAKES ANY HORSE YOU CLOCK RUN FASTER THAN EVER BEFORE!
UH-HUH. PISS OFF.

I'LL PROVE IT! ON YOUR OWN HORSE!
UH-HUH. OKAY.
SMITTY, SHOW ME WHAT SHE'S GOT!
YOU'LL SEE.
YEAH, RIGHT.
SEEMS FASTER... BUT HOW?
SEE WHAT I MEAN?
YOU DON'T HAVE A STOPWATCH LIKE THIS, NOW DO YA CASSIDY?

I'LL GIVE YOU FIVE BUCKS FOR IT.
FIVE BUCKS?! DO YOU KNOW WHAT THIS THING IS WORTH?
YEAH. FIVE BUCKS. TAKE IT OR TAKE NOTHIN', WINE HEAD.
AHH, COME ON, MAN! I'M SICK! CAN'T YOU DO NO BETTER? I GOTTA GET WELL! I... I... I...
THERE. IT'S A DEAL. SEE YA AROUND.
LATER...
BETS
STARTING NOW, MY LUCK IS GONNA CHANGE!
SHIT!

WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU CAN'T FIX IT FOR CHRIST'S SAKE?! YOU GOTTA!
SIR, I FIX WATCHES. ALL KINDS OF CLOCKS AND WATCHES. IT'S BEEN MY PROFESSION FOR OVER THIRTY YEARS, AND I'M REALLY QUITE GOOD AT IT.
AND I ASSURE YOU, THIS IS NOT A WATCH.
FRANKLY, I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'VE GOT HERE.
I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT.
IT'S A PUZZLE TO ME!

BAR
DETERMINED, CASSIDY SEEKS OUT THE MAN WHO SOLD HIM THE WATCH...
HE'S BOUND TO BE IN ONE OF THESE DUMPS!
IF I CAN'T FIND HIM, MAYBE I CAN FIX IT!
...IF HE DOES SHOW UP, TELL HIM TO CALL ME RIGHT AWAY. IT'S WORTH TEN BUCKS.
BUT THE MAN IS NOWHERE TO BE FOUND...
...'SLIKE I TOL' YOU, MAN. THAT WINE HEAD'S BEEN DEAD FOR A MONTH!
I WAS JUST TALKIN' WITH HIM THE OTHER DAY. YOU'RE THINKIN' OF SOMEONE ELSE.
I KNOW WHAT I KNOW, AND THAT OL' WINE HEAD BE DEAD, MAN. I SEEN THE BODY.
DAMN! WHAT'S GOIN' ON, HERE?!
I'LL FIGURE IT OUT IF IT KILLS ME! SCREW 'EM ALL!
AND SO...
YEAH! WHY DIDN'T I SEE IT ALL ALONG? IT'S SO OBVIOUS!

NOW, LET'S MAKE SOME REAL DOUGH!
WELL DONE, CASSIDY. ALMOST A RECORD TIME.
WHAT THE...? JEEZ, DON'T SNEAK UP ON ME LIKE THAT!
YOU! WHERE THE HELL HAVE YOU BEEN? I BEEN LOOKIN' ALL OVER FOR YOU!
OH, I'VE BEEN VERY BUSY LATELY. SCOUTING NEW TALENT FOR THE BOSSES.
AND ANYWAY, I KNEW THE PUZZLE WAS IN GOOD HANDS.
SCOUTIN'? YOU?! YOU DON'T KNOW NOTHIN' ABOUT THE PONIES! PROBABLY MORE LIKE SCOUTIN' A CAN OF STERNO!
WORD IS YOU'RE DEAD PAL! THAT'S THE KINDA IMPRESSION YOU MAKE ON FOLKS!
YES, WELL... I'LL SHOW YOU SOMETHING RATHER IMPRESSIVE RIGHT NOW!

AFTER ALL, YOU PLACED YOUR TRUST IN A WATCH THAT ONLY DELIVERED ILLUSIONS... YOU SOLVED THE PUZZLE...
YOU SHOULD BE REWARDED FOR YOUR EFFORTS.
MY, IT'S GETTING WARM IN HERE!
I THINK I'LL JUST SLIP INTO SOMETHING MORE COMFORTABLE.
AHAHAHAHA!
WH...WH...WHA... WOAH!

AHHHHHH
SKRRK
THERE! I FEEL MUCH BETTER NOW!
OH NO, DON'T RUN AWAY CASSIDY! YOU'LL MISS ALL THE FUN!
-GAK- LET ME GO! HELP!!

HA HA HA HA HA!!
OH GOD! OH MY GOD!!
THE OPERATIC SOUND OF A BILLION SOULS BEING TORTURED FILLS THE AIR...
OR IS THAT A BILLION AND ONE?

WELCOME TO HELL, MR. CASSIDY.

PLEASE! OH PLEASE, DON'T KILL ME! I'M SORRY FOR WHAT I DONE! MAYBE YOU COULD GIVE ME ANOTHER CHANCE! I'LL CHANGE!
YES INDEED MR. CASSIDY, YOU WILL CHANGE!
LET'S NOT HEAR ANYMORE "SORRY" NONSENSE, OR WE'LL CHANGE OUR MINDS!
YOU SEE YOU'VE BEEN... RECRUITED, IN A SENSE.
RECRUITED...? FOR WHAT?!
TORTURES OF THE DAMNED, OF COURSE, TORTURES OF THE DAMNED!
NO!!!
YES!
YOU MISUNDERSTAND US, MR. CASSIDY. WE'VE BEEN ADMIRING YOUR APPLICATION OF DISCIPLINE.
WHHA... WHAT D'YA MEAN?!
WE HAVE A UNIQUE EXPERIENCE PLANNED FOR YOU. A TRAINING PROGRAM.
YOU WILL BE BORN AGAIN, MR. CASSIDY; NOT OF WOMAN, BUT OF HELLFIRE!

AFTER YOUR TRANSFORMATION IN THE CREATION CHAMBER, YOU WILL BECOME ONE OF US!
THE ELITE! THE BEAUTIFUL! THE POWERFUL!
A CENOBITE. OUR LORD LEVIATHANS FRONT LINE IN THE WAR AGAINST FLESH.
YOU MEAN, I'LL GET TO...CALL THE SHOTS, I'LL GET TO TORTURE OTHERS?!
YES. DELICIOUSLY. ETERNALLY.
AFTER A FASHION, OF COURSE. FIRST, YOU WILL NEED TO BE... RE-ORDERED.
YOU'RE VERY VERY LUCKY, MR. CASSIDY!
YEAH... I AM LUCKY! FINALLY! IT'S LIKE MY HORSE HAS COME IN!
SO UH... WHERE DO I LINE UP? HOW LONG BEFORE I CAN START?
WE HAVE SUCH SIGHTS TO SHOW YOU... BUT SUCH THINGS CAN'T BE RUSHED.
IN A WAY, I GUESS THIS IS WHAT I'VE BEEN WORKING ALL MY LIFE FOR!
YES, A LIFETIME.

"THAT'S ABOUT HOW LONG IT MIGHT TAKE..."
CASSIDY IS LED TO HIS CREATION CHAMBER; A GLOWING CELL FILLED WITH AN IMPOSSIBLE NUMBER OF BURNING HORSES, THEIR EYES AFLAME...
"I THOUGHT HE'D BE DIFFERENT. HE SEEMED TO WELCOME RECRUITMENT..."
NO! WAIT! I DON'T WANT- STOP THE-- STOP!!
"NO, THE FLESH IS ALWAYS UNSTRUCTURED AT THE LAST. THEY NEVER APPRECIATE LEVIATHANS GIFT. BUT HE WILL... IN TIME.
AAAA

AFTERWORD

Some days are bad. Some days, there are just so many things going on and going wrong that that thin, invisible wire wrapped around my temples tightens convulsively, and I'm certain that Excedrin Headache #55,743 is going to be the one that finally does it.

But that's just some days.

Other days, things can get pretty exciting; like the day we received the letter from the Society of Illustrators, announcing that two pieces from **Hellraiser** (both by SI member Kent Williams — congrats, Kent!) were accepted into their 33rd Annual Competition. Some days, it's pretty rewarding to produce this book.

Then there are days like a recent weekend when, in town for a few days, Clive Barker had the chance to personally peruse the progress on his growing anthology mythology, **Hellraiser**, before speaking at a nearby horror convention. And I had the opportunity to experience the electricity of an auditorium full of fans all rising at once, like some great blanket of villi, to applaud the modern master of horror as he took the stage.

He took time to give more than a passing preview of some of the projects coming up from Epic in these pages and elsewhere, increasing the scope of the **Hellraiser** mythology; projects we'll give you a peek at in the issues ahead. And Dan and I got our ten minutes — thanks, Clive. Some days, it's pretty exciting to produce this book.

And then there's today — the beginning of the last days of a quarterly **Hellraiser**. But don't be afraid. In just three short months, look for the first bimonthly issues, 64 pages of death and terror in "living" color, on sale by June 11th. *Now* be afraid. Be very afraid.

Make my day.

Marc McLaurin
editor

Clive Barker
consultant

Robbin Brosterman
designer

Daniel Chichester
consulting editor

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assistant editor

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Time to deal another dead man's hand, courtesy of croupier Clive Barker and his cruel conceits. Here's how the cards fall tonight . . .

A pair of lovers must test their relationship — beyond the grave. Vietnam makes a soldier and a Cenobite into two-of-a-kind. Flush with terror, a mother battles monstrosities for her son's soul. And when a gambler bets on the wrong horse, it's a straight-to-hell.

Sit in a round . . . you may find the stakes irresistible.

In fact, we'd bet your life on it.

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